The Highlander

Thursday Dec 4 2025 | Issue 718

INSIDE: THE NUTCRACKER RETURNS PAGE 23 FREE

Born tuba wild

Glen Carter comes to grips with his tuba during the Haliburton Highlands Wind Symphony's 2025 Holiday concert, held at Pinestone Resort Nov. 30. For more see page 11. *Photo by Michah Wilson.*

Residents get last-chance say on budget

By Lisa Gervais

County of Haliburton taxpayers have an opportunity to speak at a Dec. 10 council meeting about the budget that will impact their bank accounts for 2026.

A draft budget was tabled Nov. 26 - along with some measures to reduce the impact from councillors Bob Carter, Murray Fearrey and warden Dave Burton who make up a small committee that has been working with senior staff. They met with CAO Gary Dyke and director of corporate services, Andrea Robinson Oct. 27 and Nov. 3.

While staff hope to pass the budget during next Wednesday's meeting, there are some outstanding matters, including some key recommendations from the council liaison team.

They want to reduce the sustainable roads infrastructure program by $500,000, which would mean a smaller section of County Road 507 being resurfaced next year.

They want to cap spending for the Haliburton County Public Library at $1 million for 2026. They are calling on the service to draw on their reserves, estimated to be $430,000, to bridge the gap. It would mean $218,078 less for the library - while cutting the budget by $336,259.

They are further asking staff to back down from some hires, including not employing a full-time GIS technologist, but providing a temporary contract. They also want to hold off hiring a grant writer-procurement specialist.

Everyone agrees on hiring three advanced care paramedics and a cybersecurity analyst.

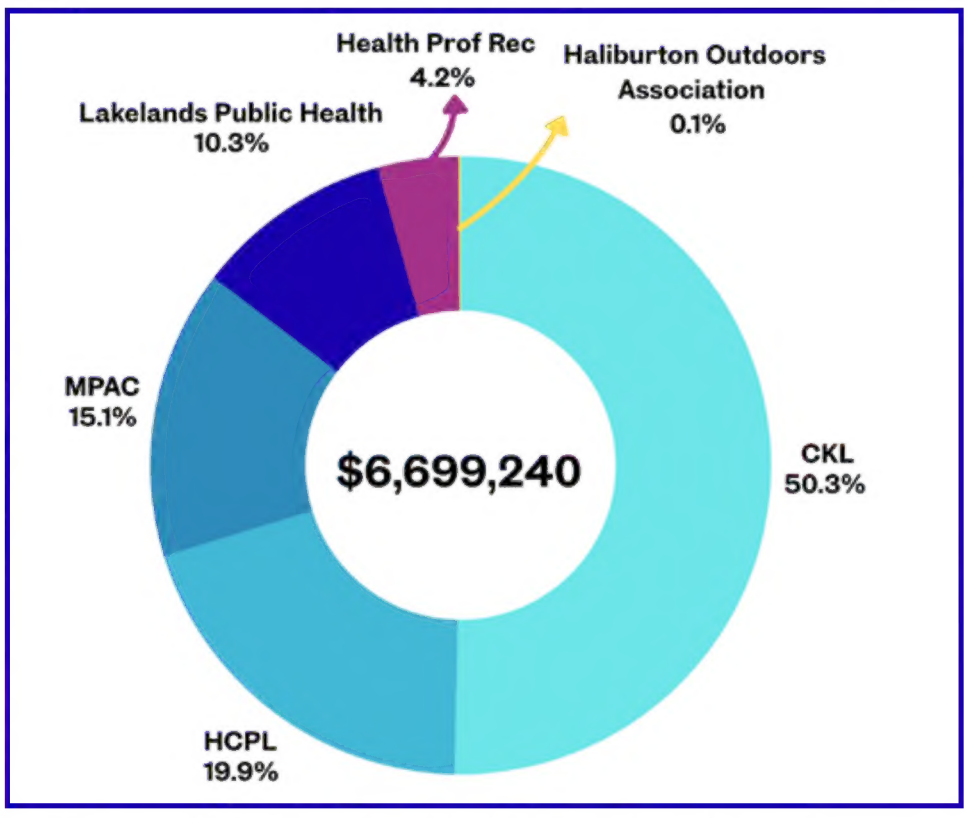
Breaking it down, staff are projecting a tax rate increase of 7.72 per cent – equal to $20.75 per $100,000 of assessment for the year. They stressed Haliburton County continues to have the second lowest residential tax rate within the Eastern Ontario counties.

This, however, does not include the continuation of a 1.5 per cent dedicated capital levy to address the long-term infrastructure gap identified in the County's asset management plan. Nor does it include a new community health and well-being levy of 0.5 per cent to support health-related needs.

Continued **'Library'** on page 2

Highlander news

Library CAO Andrea Brown presented the services budget to council Nov. 26. *File.*



A graph showing County payments to external partners. *County of Haliburton.*

County to debate libraries, roads and jobs

Continued from page 1

However, Carter, Fearrey and Burton felt 7.72 per cent was too much for taxpayers. Their cuts would take $794,318 from the draft budget, making it a 4.63 per cent tax rate increase - $12.45 per $100,000 of assessment – plus the 1.5 per cent and 0.5 per cent levies.

During last week's presentation, Dyke said it's been one of his most challenging budgets in his 30-year municipal career.

He noted they'll give the City of Kawartha Lakes 27 per cent more this year for social services and housing; all up shipping $6.7 million to external partners, that also include the library board, MPAC, Lakelands Public Health and money to recruit healthcare professionals. Robinson said that was almost 40 per cent of the budget being transferred to others.

> *"You absolutely can do everything you want to do with the money we've already given you, and going to give you this year."*
>
> **- Coun. Bob Carter**

Dyke talked up the community health and well-being levy, saying money raised would "provide services for the most vulnerable in our community, making sure we properly address gaps, with our partners."

Battle of the books

The Haliburton County Public Library tabled its budget – seeking an additional $118,180 this year, or a 9.7 per cent increase. A big chunk of that is to give the Dorset community more library hours.

The library budget was just one area the liaison committee cracked down on, saying the board should use reserves to help offset rising costs.

Coun. Jennifer Dailloux, who sits on the library board, said, "this is my hill to die on" in disagreeing. She was worried council would be gambling that next year will be easier, and the library funded at pre-existing levels. If not, she said it could mean "catastrophic trauma" to the service next year.

Carter said it was a case of the service using some of the money taxpayers have already given it, whilst accepting $1 million from the County this year. He said that would allow the board to meet its needs for 2026. He stressed it was "not a cut in library funding. You absolutely can do everything you want to do with the money we've already given you, and going to give you this year."

Fearrey added the townships provide resources to the libraries, including buildings. He said it wasn't a reserve as much as a piggy bank of taxpayers' money. He said using part of it would still leave $100,000 in reserves.

Carter said they had to look at cuts - as with the 7.72 per cent plus two per cent in levies, they were close to a 10 per cent tax increase.

Deputy mayor Liz Danielsen does not like the idea of cutting $500,000 from roads, saying council is merely kicking a problem down the line. Fearrey replied if council does not want to pass a budget with a 10-11 per cent increase, he was open to other suggestions.

Coun. Cec Ryall liked the community health and well-being levy, saying it was "way overdue."

Dyke elaborated they want to build a reserve, not to create programs, but fill gaps in broader community health needs. For example, he recalled how they donated $1M to the CT scanner without a levy. "So, we can make those sorts of contributions without spikes in the budget and taking away from something else." He added it was about sustainability, "setting aside core funding now for what comes up."

To provide feedback, email the County of Haliburton clerk's department at clerk@haliburtoncounty.ca If telelpone, 705-286-1333 and ask for the department

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Highlander news

Minden Hills council putting a lid on it

By Lisa Gervais

The Minden Curling Club roof has received temporary repairs to stop leaking this winter, with a full replacement slated for the spring.

Meanwhile, the Minden Hills Cultural Centre and library roof fix should be done this month or in early 2026.

Director of public works, Mike Timmins, brought an update on both projects to the Nov. 27 council meeting. At its Sept. 11 meeting, council directed the township to waive the requirement for a formal tender process under its procurement policy to expedite the urgent projects. Council asked staff to negotiate and come back.

Speaking to the curling club roof, Timmins said staff, along with Tatham Engineering, reached out to roofing contractors in hopes of getting the full job done in 2025. However, he said none were willing to take on the project at this time of year.

However, the township received one proposal that included a quick fix for this winter, with the entire project in the spring. The immediate, temporary repair cost is $8,000 plus HST.

"ICI Roofing Ltd. has proposed a thermoplastic polyolefin (TPO) retrofit roof, to be installed in the spring of 2026. The TPO retrofit will be less intrusive than a full roof reconstruction and will come at a lower cost. TPO retrofit lifespan is expected to be approximately 20 years," Timmins said. He added the cost is approximately $177,000 plus HST.

Timmins said awarding the project now allows the contractor to schedule the work as a priority in their 2026 plan and to secure supplies.

Curlers take to the ice at the Minden Curling Club. *File.*

"The timing for this project (is aligned) with the curling club's re-insulation of the underside of the roof. Neither project will hinder the other work. Given the circumstances, staff directed ICI Roofing Ltd. to move forward with the temporary repairs, and the work has been completed," Timmins said.

In the 2025 budget, $257,500 was allocated from reserves for the roof replacement at the curling club. With the award of this project, $72,000 will remain in reserves from the 2025 allocation, he said.

Cultural centre roof

Timmins asked that council delegate to CAO Cynthia Fletcher the award for the roof replacement at the cultural centre and library at a cost not to exceed $150,000; and that the additional $50,000 for that roofing project come from reserves.

"Township staff have been working on this project with Tatham Engineering as well. Staff have received quotes which are in the process of being reviewed. The intent is to build a new roof over the existing, with improved slope," he said.

He added that due to the nature of this reconstruction, work is not weather dependent and is expected to be awarded and completed in December, or early 2026.

However, coun. Tammy McKelvey sought clarity on if the job was for both the cultural centre and library roofs. She was told it would be for the cultural centre and only part of the library.

McKelvey said the library roof has been leaking for some time, requiring staff to move computers towards the centre of the building when water comes in. She said she was concerned the township was not doing the entire building.

Timmins said they could look at expanding the project, but it would come at a cost. Mayor Bob Carter suggested increasing the upset limit to $225,000, from $150,000. "Let's get this done and get it done right, and get it done soon."

Coun. Pam Sayne agreed with a higher upset limit to get the roof completed as soon as possible as she is worried about leaks in the cultural centre putting an expensive arts collection in jeopardy.

"We have staff mopping floors from roof leaks and water coming up from the ground. I really want to get this started tomorrow."

Dysart told they're behind investing in future infrastructure

By Mike Baker

Dysart et al council learned last week that it would cost $265 million to replace all municipally-owned buildings and assets in the township.

Sarah Craig, a senior asset management adviser with PSD Citywide Inc., told elected officials during a Nov. 25 meeting that 78 percent of the municipality's existing infrastructure is in fair condition or better, with the overall condition considered good, ranked at 68 per cent.

She told council, however, that if it wants to maintain that score it will have to drastically increase the amount it's putting away for future investments.

By continuing to invest around $2.4 million into capital costs, Craig said the township's assets would decline to poor quality, ranked at 39 per cent, over the next 100 years. Increasing the investment to $5.5 million per year would maintain current standards, while upping the spend to $6.1 million would utilize all assets as they're intended through their lifecycle.

The total value of assets breaks down to: $120.3 million for roads and related infrastructure; $57.3 million for wastewater services; $35.2 million for facilities; $22.7 million for bridges and culverts; $12.9 million for fleet; $6.8 million for land improvements; $5.1 million for equipment; and $4.8 million for stormwater services.

The township's bridges and culverts were ranked fair at 60 per cent, with all other areas considered to be in good condition.

"The condition year over year is declining, though," Craig said.

She recommended council consider a 2.2 per cent tax increase dedicated purely to capital costs over the next 10 years, while upping wastewater rates 5.1 per cent, noting that should help the municipality catch up with its infrastructure shortfall.

Council opted to receive the report without taking any action.

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Highlander news

Montreal massacre 'frightening time'

By Mike Baker

It's been 36 years, but Kim Dolan remembers exactly where she was when news started to break about the tragic Dec. 6, 1989 shooting at Ecole Polytechnique de Montreal that claimed the lives of 14 women in one of the deadliest and most notorious acts of femicide in Canadian history.

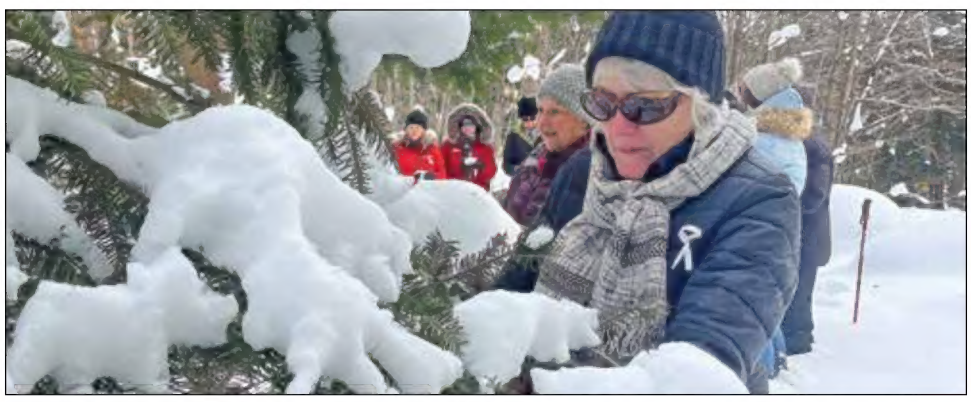
Now executive director at the YWCA Peterborough Haliburton, Dolan said she was working as a shelter coordinator and frontline counsellor in Peterborough at the time.

"I was still fairly new to working at the YWCA – it was a gut-wrenching and, frankly, frightening time," Dolan said.

"That day really served as a catalyst for people's concerns about violence against women. It shone a light on what was happening," she added. "Usually, this sort of thing happens behind closed doors and women carry a lot of shame, guilt or sense of responsibility for what happened. This incident brought the issue into the public eye and forced everyone to start talking and thinking about it more."

It was confirmed after the shooting that the perpetrator, 25-year-old Marc Lepine, had deliberately targeted females – separating them from male students and saying he was fighting feminism before opening fire.

In the years since, Dec. 6 has been recognized as the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women in Canada.



An attendee pays her respects at last year's vigil at the Haliburton Sculpture Forest recognizing those lost during the 1989 'Montreal massacre' femicide. *File.*

The YWCA is partnering with the Haliburton Highlands chapter of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) for a community vigil Dec. 6, remembering those lost during the incident, dubbed the 'Montreal massacre,' and all other acts of femicide since.

The event is being held at the Haliburton Sculpture Forest, with people gathering in the parking lot at the Haliburton Highlands Museum at 10:30 a.m and walking over. The vigil will begin at 10:45 a.m. It's the second time a vigil is being held in Haliburton, after last year's inaugural observance.

The morning will feature a reading of the names of the 14 women that died, a moment of silence and a song of remembrance. Attendees will be invited to tie ribbons on a tree, serving as a symbol of hope and solidarity.

Dolan said the vigil is an opportunity for the community to stand together, united against the threat of gender-based violence.

"Since 1989, one would think we might have seen a significant shift backwards in terms of violence and the damage it causes women physically, emotionally and spiritually, but that violence continues to grow," Dolan said. "Last year in Canada, 187 women and girls were murdered by someone close to them, 62 of those in Ontario."

More than 160 municipalities across the province have declared gender-based violence an epidemic – described as a sudden increase in the number of cases of a disease or issue above what is normally expected. Despite calls for the provincial government to do the same, Dolan said there's been no official declaration.

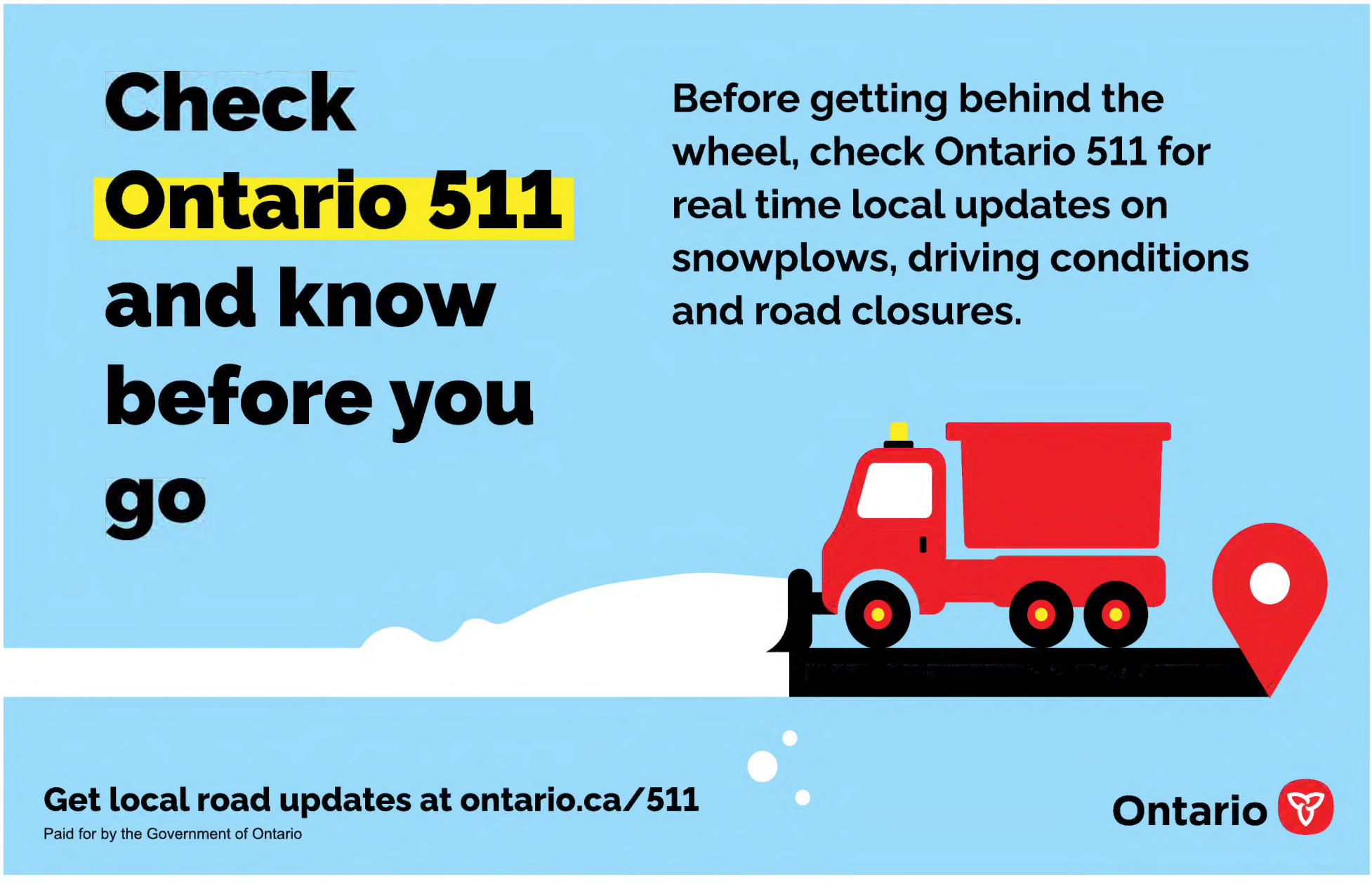
She said there was a recommendation from a recent province-backed committee looking at violence against women to declare gender-based violence endemic – meaning something is consistently present in a particular geographic area or population.

The YWCA operates the Haliburton Emergency Rural Safe Space (HERS) in the County and its manager, Nycole Duncan, admitted the facility – which provides accommodation to women and children escaping domestic violence – is always busy.

"Sadly, there's not a shortage of occupancy," Duncan said. The space has been open since 2005, providing shelter to hundreds of County-based women since.

Duncan confirmed she will be at this week's vigil, along with other HERS staff members. She believes these type of partnerships are key when it comes to flipping the script on violence against women.

"Working together and developing even greater partnerships within the community is what creates the opportunity for change that we all want to see and have worked for in Haliburton County to achieve," Duncan said.



Ways to support healthcare this season

By Lisa Gervais

Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation (HHHSF) has announced a new corporate giving program.

Executive director, Melanie Klodt Wong, said Heat-Line Freeze Protection Systems kickstarted the campaign by pledging $25,000 over the next five years to support local healthcare.

Klodt Wong said the gift from the Heise family, which founded Heat-Line, "marks the launch of the HHHS Foundation's new corporate giving program, designed to promote the importance of corporate philanthropy within the community and to inspire others to give in ways that are meaningful and lasting."

Lorne Heise, founder of Heat-Line, said, "our company has always believed in giving back to the community that helped us grow. Together with Laura Roberts and Brent Heise, we are proud to support the HHHS Foundation and to help strengthen access to care for everyone in the Highlands."

Klodt Wong said through the new program, the foundation, "aims to engage businesses who wish to make a longer-term commitment to the health of the community – businesses that, like Heat-Line, recognize the value of giving back and leading by example."

She added, "we are fortunate to have a community of businesses that consistently give back, each in their own way, and their continued generosity is vital.

"Our new corporate giving program offers an opportunity for those looking to make a sustained investment in healthcare and to share that commitment with their clients, staff, and the wider community.

"There are many ways to give this holiday season – and now, this program offers one more meaningful way for local businesses to make a lasting impact."

For more information about the corporate giving program, or for other ways to give, contact the foundation office.

Top: Jesse Woodward won the $25,000 early bird in October and then Ricky Danilko (pictured with wife Winnie) won the grand prize of $300,144 in the same month. Representing HHHSF Melanie Klodt Wong, executive director (left) and David Blodgett (right), chair of the board. *Photos submitted.*

Magic of giving

HHHSF has also launched its annual 'Believe in the Magic of Giving' campaign.

A local couple, Don and Anne, whose last names are not being released and declined to be interviewed, are the champions this year.

They tell the story of how Don's cancer treatments became more intensive and the couple faced transportation problems.

"The radiation was exhausting, and the long drives to appointments was becoming impossible." Don had always been the driver, and Anne nervous to get behind the wheel. "They didn't know how they would manage."

Then they heard about HHHS Community Support Services' medically-necessary transportation program. They qualified for the subsidy. In September, Don took seven trips to Peterborough and one to Oshawa for treatment, each trip only costing $25 thanks to donor-supported subsidies.

"It's been really good," Don said. "It's taken the pressure off both of us, and now we're dropped right at the door, so I don't have to walk as far with my walker. We have marvelous volunteers, and this program means so much to people like us who want to stay independent."

Klodt Wong said last year, the Foundation subsidized more than 10,000 kilometres of medically-necessary travel.

She cited how the gift of giving has made the new diagnostic imaging wing almost complete, thanks to the community. She said another example is Meals-on-Wheels. She said the need for subsidies had doubled in less than a year. Last year, they shared more than 10,000 meals. She added long-term care residents now benefit from 'MealSuite', an innovative nutrition system that provides personalized care. People can go to hhhs.ca/foundation to donate.

And as of Dec. 2, the Foundation announced a $100,000 Giving Tuesday match from Scott Pollard and Suzannah Patmios. Every donation made from Giving Tuesday through Dec. 23 will be matched dollar-for-dollar, doubling support for essential local healthcare.

Pollard and Patmios understand the importance of supporting Haliburton County, saying, "we believe it is the right thing to do and we are proud to support the health of this community."

Holiday 50-50 lottery

Klodt Wong added the foundation's 50/50 lottery is doubling up until the end of December, supported by Minden Subaru. Tickets are available at hhhsf5050.ca

"Every ticket purchased is an investment in local healthcare. The 50/50 is a fun and easy way for our community to give back – and with double the draws, it's the perfect time to play."

She added the Foundation also recently celebrated two local winners through its participation in 'split the pot', an Ontario-wide hospital fundraising initiative. Jesse Woodward won the $25,000 early bird in October and then Ricky Danilko won the grand prize of $300,144 in the same month.

"It's amazing to see local names on those winning tickets. When our community participates, everyone wins, not just the lucky ticket holders, but all who depend on quality healthcare close to home. Tickets are also at hhhsf5050.ca.

Believe in the Magic of Giving!

Your holiday gift in support of LOCAL HEALTH CARE helps create magic all year long!

This is the Magic of Giving...

The new Diagnostic Imaging wing is almost complete, 100% funded by this community. State-of-the-art technology in the County, reduces travel for imaging services and frees up space for a dedicated mental health room.

Investing in equipment is investing in our community. The new CT Scanner is attracting skilled professionals and strengthening rural healthcare for our community. **HHHS is evolving toward a model of excellence in rural healthcare.**

The need for Meals-On-Wheels subsidies has doubled in less than a year. Last year, we shared over 10,000 meals, bringing comfort and care to our most vulnerable neighbours. This year, we aim to do even more.

Long-term Care residents now benefit from "MealSuite" an innovative nutrition system that provides personalized care. **Thanks to community support, HHHS staff have more time to engage with residents.**

"One of the Best Investments You Could Make"

Don and Anne have deep roots in the Highlands – Don's great-grandmother built the Bonnie View, now a local landmark. But Don's cancer treatments became more intensive, the couple faced a challenge. The radiation was exhausting, and the long drives to appointments was becoming impossible.

Don had always been the driver, but with his health declining and Anne nervous to get behind the wheel again, they didn't know how they would manage.

That changed when they learned about **HHHS Community Support Services' medically necessary transportation program** during a seminar at their apartment complex.

"Once we spoke with the intake team, we learned we qualified for the subsidy," Anne says. "We had our first ride booked before the end of the meeting."

In September alone, Don took **seven trips to Peterborough** and one to **Oshawa** for treatment – each trip costing **$25** thanks to donor-supported subsidies.

"It's been really good," Don says. "It's taken the pressure off both of us, and now we're dropped right at the door, so I don't have to walk as far with my walker. We have marvelous volunteers, and this program means so much to people like us who want to stay independent."

Last year, the Foundation **subsidized over 10,000 kilometres** of medically necessary travel. With your help, **we can exceed that this year**.

This is the magic of giving.

To donate by mail make your cheque payable to:
HHHS Foundation

☐ $35 ☐ $75 ☐ $200 ☐ Other $_____

Donor Name _____

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Believe in the Magic of Giving Today!

☐ Yes! Please send me email updates on the impact of my gift

☐ I'm thinking of adding HHHSF to my Will, please contact me

☐ Please do NOT publicly acknowledge this gift – I wish it to be anonymous

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2025

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Highlander news

ALGONQUIN HIGHLANDS NEWS

Fees increased

Algonquin Highlands' chief building official, Greg Moore, told council recently that his department is running at a 40 per cent deficit due to a "major decrease" in building and septic permit issuance in 2025.

"This current year has been, basically, a status quo of the last couple. We did not realize a large uptick in permit volume. Therefore, we are not anticipating enough fees being generated to cover our expenses," Moore said.

He noted that, over the past nine years, the department has seen revenues for permits average out at $245,000, while expenses this year are around $270,000.

The total value of permit fees collected this year, from Jan. 1 to Oct. 31, is just over $182,000. The township has processed 147 building permits and 52 septic permits. Last year, the department issued 150 building permits and 64 septic permits, collecting $173,624 in fees.

The construction value of all new builds in Algonquin Highlands in 2025 is pegged at $24 million.

To get his budget back in the black, Moore proposed a series of fee increases – ranging from 20 to 100 per cent.

Costs for permits for single family dwellings or cottages is going up from $1 to $1.20 per sq. ft.; commercial, industrial and institutional builds are up from $1 to $1.30 per sq. ft.; garages, boathouses and accessory buildings up from 80 cents to $1 per sq. ft.; decks, docks and open porches up from 60 to 80 cents per sq. ft.; permit maintenance fees are doubling from $100 to $200; and renovations or repair fees up from 70 cents to $1 per sq. ft. There's also a $50 increase to building permit administration fees, up to $200 from $150.

Moore said the increases are in-line with what Dysart et al, Highlands East and Minden Hills charge.

Council supported fee increases across the board, with rates for parks, recreation and trails, environmental, administration and airport programs and initiatives also upped. The new rates will be brought back to council for final approval Dec. 11.

Algonquin Highlands building department is running at a deficit. *File.*

Winter burial costs

A winter burial in the green burial section at St. Stephen's Cemetery will set people back at least $2,400, with the township recently updating its interment fees.

Public works director Adam Thorn said there is also a new $500 fee for anyone wanting to install a memorial plaque in the green burial section, with engraving on the columbarium increasing from $400 to $425. He noted all fees are calculated on a cost-recovery basis.

The township is also looking to invest about $4,000 for a frost ripper attachment for its backhoe, which would enable staff to prepare graves for winter and green burial in-house. He said the tool will allow staff to open graves more efficiently.

North Shore Road

Council has set aside $3.7 million for the reconstruction of a 2.2 kilometre stretch of North Shore Road, with the rebuild to begin in the spring.

Graham Potter of Jewell Engineering, retained last year to help with project design, said the main facet of the project is stabilizing the slope along the shore of Maple Lake. He said this will improve drainage and public safety, with the township also widening and resurfacing the road. He estimates the surface will last 15-20 years.

Because the work is so close to the water, the project will need to be reviewed by the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), which will be completed over the winter. An environmental review was conducted by Stantech this year – while some birds reside in the area, the assessment did not identify any critical habitat for endangered species. Potter indicated he expects the fisheries review to be a formality.

Pending approval, work along the water will run July 16 to Sept. 30, 2026. Deputy mayor Jennifer Dailloux wanted it to be done during the winter, to limit impacts on residents, but was told it had to be a summer project due to DFO restrictions.

It was noted structures leading to or on the water in the impacted area will need to be removed before the work can proceed – the township said it will give residents plenty of advance notice.

Flying the flag

Community groups and causes can now apply to have their flags flown at Algonquin Highlands town hall after council approved a new flag flying policy Nov. 20.

Pre-approved flags include the Pride Flag, to be raised during Haliburton County Pride Week in August, the 'Every Child Matters' flag for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Sept. 30, and the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence flag, running Nov. 16 to Dec. 10.

Requests can be submitted to clerk Dawn Newhook at least four weeks prior to the date for flying. They must support residents or events in Algonquin Highlands, by way of a public awareness campaign or to foster a sense of community; applications can be made once per year; and flags will be flown for up to one week at a time, except for the Remembrance Day flag, which is flown for a month.

Flags must be no larger than three-foot-by-six-foot and provided to the municipal office at least five days prior to the requested display date.

Opening rescheduled

The township will hold a grand opening of the new green burial section at St. Stephen's Cemetery on May 31, 2026 at 1 p.m. The event was originally slated for September, then pushed off until Oct. 19 and delayed again last month. The space is the first green burial section to come online in Haliburton County. *(Algonquin Highlands news compiled by Mike Baker)*

DYSART ET AL NEWS

New dentist

A new dentist will soon be moving into the Haliburton space recently vacated by Volunteer Dental Outreach (VDO).

Dr. Bill Kerr shuttered the practice in October after seeing more than 1,300 patients and completing in excess of $4.7 million of in-kind dentistry over the past 14 years. Because of the rollout of the new Canada Dental Care Plan (CDCP), which offers complimentary care to those on low or fixed incomes, Kerr felt there was no longer a need for VDO.

Paula Crawford from Your Hometown Dentist, which runs six offices in the Peterborough, Northumberland and Kawartha Lakes areas, said her team is looking to take over the office at 739 Mountain St – and asked council to continue subsidizing rent, which they agreed to do.

The plan, she said, would be to offer free dental procedures to people based on need, likely two-to-three days per month. It will be available to anyone who has difficulty affording dental procedures. In addition, Crawford said they would also staff the office with a denturist and would have sedation options for children's procedures.

The new office will open in early 2026.

A MESSAGE FROM
Haliburton Highlands CHAMBER of COMMERCE
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Lovin' it Local
Kawartha Lakes & Haliburton County

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Haliburton County has many great options for supporting local businesses.
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Haliburton Highlands CHAMBER of COMMERCE

Editorial opinion

TheHighlander
Published by The Highlander Newspaper Limited

OUR MISSION

To tell the story of Haliburton County each week.

To be a source of information and inspiration through stories and ideas.

To report on issues, people and events important to the community.

To reflect and promote pride in the culture, people and landscape of The Highlands.

To encourage Highlanders to believe in themselves, in our community, and in their power to make our place in the world better every day.

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Sleeping taxpayers

By Lisa Gervais

When I sat down to write this editorial Tuesday, the County of Haliburton budget meeting had received just 114 views.

And, yet, the budget that will likely be passed next week will raise more than $27.7 million thanks to taxpayers like you and I.

It shapes not only where money will be spent in 2026 – but some calculations for 10 years out.

If council goes with staff's recommendations, it means you'll pay another $20.75 per $100,000 of assessment. And while the County will tell you we have the second lowest tax rate of comparable Eastern Ontario counties, that is still a whack – especially when you add on a 1.5 per cent dedicated capital levy and a 0.5 per cent community health and well-being levy. That 7.72 per cent tax rate increase is really 9.72. That is significant.

If council opts to side with the three people who represent them on a budget committee, the impact will be a 4.63 per cent tax rate – an extra $12.45 per $100,000 of assessment. Add the levies and that's still 6.63 per cent.

And … we still have to add what our townships are going to charge us. I'm hearing they are struggling with budgets, facing challenges such as a possible 11 per cent increase for OPP billing. And, there is still the school board taxation part of the equation.

I don't know about you, but my wages have not increased 6.63 per cent, or 9.72 per cent – or when all of these bills are added up – in excess of 10 per cent. I am not keeping up with the cost of living. And, in addition to taxes, my utility bills and grocery bills are headed north, not south.

As a reporter, I watched the Nov. 26 budget meeting. But I also did so through the lens of a taxpayer. I asked myself if I like the budget. What would I have changed if I had the chance to weigh in?

With just 114 people tuning in, and some providing feedback to the County, a very small percentage of taxpayers are actually having input into a budget that will impact their household spending.

I think the council liaison team of Bob Carter, Murray Fearrey and Dave Burton have done a good job on behalf of taxpayers.

They would cut $500,000 from roads. That means a small section of County Road 507 will have to wait until next year for resurfacing. I can live with that. Mind you, I don't live on the road.

When it comes to the library, I am a staunch supporter of the service. Last year, I argued against library budget cuts. This year, looking at the competing demands, I can live with the liaison committee asking the library service to further dip into reserves to help offset extraordinary pressures this year. After all, as a taxpayer, I have been contributing to that reserve. It's time to use it. The library will still have $100,000 tucked away.

I also agree with the committee not signing off on six new full-time hires. They have agreed to four (a cybersecurity analyst and three advanced care paramedics).

I also agree with the levies, 1.5 per cent for capital costs so we have a piggy bank when the bridges and culverts fail. I'm also okay with the 0.5 per cent for community health and well-being. I say 'okay' because if the province funded health and social services the way they should, we wouldn't need this levy.

I encourage readers to get involved. Watch the meeting. You have a chance on Dec. 10 to provide feedback. But, I suspect, as usual, the only feedback will come after the fact, once folks get their tax bills.

HUMANS OF HALIBURTON HIGHLANDS

Fishing off the dock

By Susan Tromanhauser

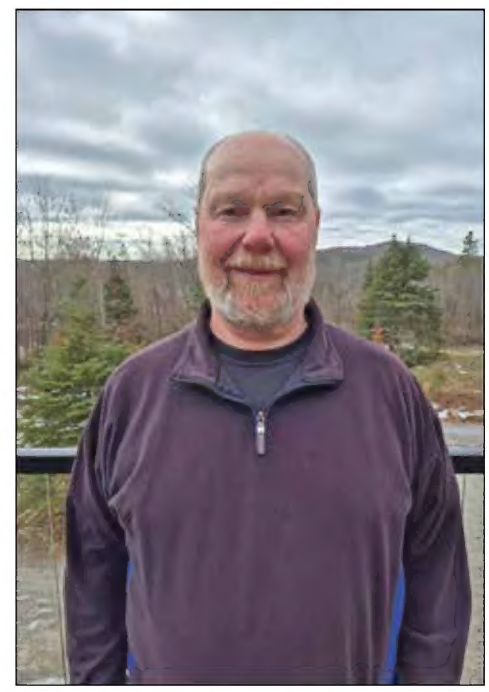
Dan Somogyi discovered the Haliburton Highlands during an off-roading trip with the Northern Light Jeep Club. Amazed by the many hidden gems and how wild it still was in comparison to Muskoka, he became so captivated, he created a plan to retire to the area. A job opportunity working remotely unexpectedly presented itself, enabling him to transition to Haliburton even earlier than planned. By the time COVID became a reality, Somogyi was already settled in his new home, and was an early adapter to the work-from-home culture.

Somogyi lived the best of both worlds, working and living remotely in the Highlands while occasionally travelling to large cities across North America for client meetings. Those occasional urban visits allowed him to get his fix of ethnic food, the only thing he missed in Haliburton.

Somogyi built his home on a property surrounded by Crown land, the last concession between Haliburton and Peterborough counties, his closest neighbour a kilometre away. While the remoteness of his property is what Somogyi covets, it initially was an obstacle to overcome. The Hydro feed to his new home came with a $25,000 price tag. Instead, Somogyi installed a state-of-the-art solar system. Panels collect and store energy in batteries in the basement. If there is no sun, a propane generator will automatically charge the batteries as needed. This is usually only necessary during winter months, six weeks either side of winter solstice. Somogyi reports the generator has not been on since last March. Somogyi assures, "visitors never notice a difference." He has a large television, refrigerator and, of course, required internet service. Neighbours often lose power, yet Somogyi's service is never interrupted and there are no monthly Hydro bills.

Before his recent retirement, Somogyi spent his days behind his desk, "itching to turn off the laptop and get outside." He now has lots of time to get out his chainsaw and stock firewood. He admits some people find cutting and stacking wood work, but he finds it relaxing and uses the wood as an alternative source for heat in combination with propane. He loves to cook, influenced by his travels, as well as his mother. He also enjoys the fresh air of skiing at Sir Sam's, continuing a sport he began as a child.

A new activity keeping Somogyi's schedule full is taekwondo. Twice a week, he travels to West Guilford to the Kang Chul Martial Arts Academy. While never a gym rat, Somogyi knew he needed to keep moving as he aged. He is about to receive his red stripe, three belts away from black belt. Taekwondo provides mind and body working together to improve balance, coordination and flexibility. The added bonus is the new group of friends he now has.



Dan Somogyi. *Submitted.*

Somogyi enjoys the remoteness of his home, Gooderham not far away provides everything he needs. He also appreciates culture that the occasional travels to Peterborough provides, but fishing off his dock and being outside are what Somogyi appreciates most of all.

Editorial opinion

LETTERS

Public interest and safety

Dear editor,

In my mailbox last week, I received a missive from MP Jamie Schmale's office imploring us to "take action" to "restore freedom and choice" by signing a petition to support the proposed Conservative Bill C-224. That bill would "amend the Food and Drugs Act to provide that natural health products are not therapeutic products within the meaning of that Act and, therefore, are not subject to the same monitoring regime as other drugs."

The problem with this statement is Natural Health Products (NHPs) are marketed and used to "restore or maintain good health," and for "prevention and treatment of an illness or condition." So, even if they are not "therapeutic products" as per the Food and Drugs Act, NHPs are certainly used as such by the public.

"Therapeutic" means anything from "curing illness" to "having a beneficial effect on the body or mind," or "producing a useful or favourable result or effect" (*Mirriam Webster*). It's a stretch to say NHPs are not used for therapeutic intent.

NHPs have risk: contamination, incorrect ingredients, incorrect or unknown dosing, unproven claims, interactions with other drugs, allergies, side effects, toxicity. The government of Canada website "About Natural Health Products" cites a 12 per cent reporting of adverse reactions from the public who use these products.

Currently, Health Canada's website advises Canadians to look for the Natural Product Number (NPN) or Homeopathic Medicine Number (DIN-HM) indicating the product is authorized for sale in Canada, is safe and effective, is manufactured without contamination or incorrect ingredients. Good idea.

Rather than pouring over their dictionaries splitting semantic hairs on the definition of "therapeutic," I hope those in receipt of this flyer give it a good think and vote no, bad idea, Mr. Schmale.

Nell Thomas
Minden Hills (2025 Liberal candidate for Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes, Brock)

PHOTO OF THE WEEK

Fred Pyziak sent this photo, telling us "Harry the Hairy Woodpecker literally dropped by ... didn't quite touch the bench as it was 'on the fly'."

You get what you don't vote for

Dear editor,

Regarding your editorial (*The Highlander*, Nov. 20) titled 'Buck a Beer' Ford. It's disappointing to realize how few Ontarians voted in the last provincial election. How many people don't care about what's happening to our province.

Ford's government closed the Minden ER, in a community that is growing. Closing LCBO and beer stores is a mistake on many levels.

Ford is funneling funds to his friends. The Greenbelt scandal, the skills training money going to a strip club, the financial disaster of Ontario Place, the closing of the Science Centre and, now, Ford is after the Exhibition grounds. We're watching corruption in real time.

Ford has done nothing to reduce corporate greed, but has instead made our lives harder.

Are folks in rural Ontario voting against their own best interests so they can 'own the Libs?' Is it about gender politics or woke ideology? I don't get it. Ford is clearly corrupt and selling off Ontario and no one really seems to care. Sadly, our kids and grandkids are going to care that we didn't stand up and protect what is ours.

K.J. Brown
Minden Hills

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Highlander business

Gym meeting members where they're at

By Lisa Gervais

For Alex Monteiro, running a gym is all about reducing friction for members.

"Life is busy, and finding time for the gym can be tough," the co-owner of the new Highland Strength and Performance (HSP) in Minden says.

He added his philosophy is making the experience as seamless as possible and moving away from the 'all or nothing' mindset. "We can help build momentum within a community that now identifies as strong and resilient without the extra pressure of having to see oneself as a 'fitness person'. Being strong and healthy so you can fully engage in what matters most to you is always worth showing up for."

Monteiro and his wife, Heather, own the new business in the Heritage Plaza building. Monteiro has worked in the fitness industry for more than a decade; training everyone from youth athletes, busy professionals, and older folks looking to stay strong and active.

"Regardless of age or ability, my starting point is to always pull from athletic strength and conditioning principles and make them scalable and accessible for every client."

HSP is the second personal training business he has started. His first is Atom Athletics, a mobile personal training company in Toronto. He said his time there "shaped every aspect of HSP."

Since the first time Heather brought him to her family's place on Horseshoe Lake,

Alex Monteiro of Highland Strength and Performance. *Photo by Lisa Gervais.*

Monteiro said he's been devising ways to spend more time in Minden. "It has been our second home for seven years, and during that time I have kept an eye on the fitness industry here and felt that although there are plenty of great options in the County, something like HSP was missing in Minden.

"With Minden's growing population, both locally and on the lakes, I saw an opportunity to expand fitness options, not to replace what already exists, but to better support the community in the way it deserves. There's a fitness style for everyone, and offering more options helps more people find something they enjoy and stay active."

They offer semi-private personal training as well as strength and performance classes.

He added he and Heather make their goal one of meeting members where they are, so they can support them in getting to where they want to go, which is why they've designed a flexible membership model and class schedule. They keep memberships month-to-month and allow for membership pauses. They offer flexible scheduling.

As for the space, they stumbled upon it when visiting a Minden restaurant. "Within a few weeks, we were meeting with the realtor for Heritage Plaza and the rest is history."

Monteiro said the business' new digs needed to function as a gym, but they didn't want it to feel like just a gym. The open layout gave them the flexibility to design thoughtfully, balancing enough equipment for workouts while leaving space to comfortably host classes.

They also aimed to create a welcoming environment; including a gallery wall.

"It's vintage outdoor/sports-themed, relaxed, and even features a small but growing library for members to borrow from. Heather poured her heart into the gallery wall, collecting antiques from around the area. We were even gifted 100-year-old wooden golf clubs from our neighbour, Bob. It's not just a reminder of everything we have come to love about Minden, but the unbelievably supportive community we have here."

Find them at: https://highlandsnp.ca/ or email info@highlandsnp.ca

Staanworth Non-Profit Housing Corporation

Is looking for a

Volunteer Board Member

Staanworth Non-Profit Housing Corporation is seeking an individual to join our Board of Directors.

Our organization manages three properties including Staanworth Terrace and Court as well as Floralan and provides housing for 145 individuals in Minden. We are committed to providing safe, well-maintained homes and fostering a positive community for our tenants.

Serving on the Board is a rewarding volunteer opportunity to contribute your skills and experience to support local housing, help guide organizational decisions, and make a difference in your community.

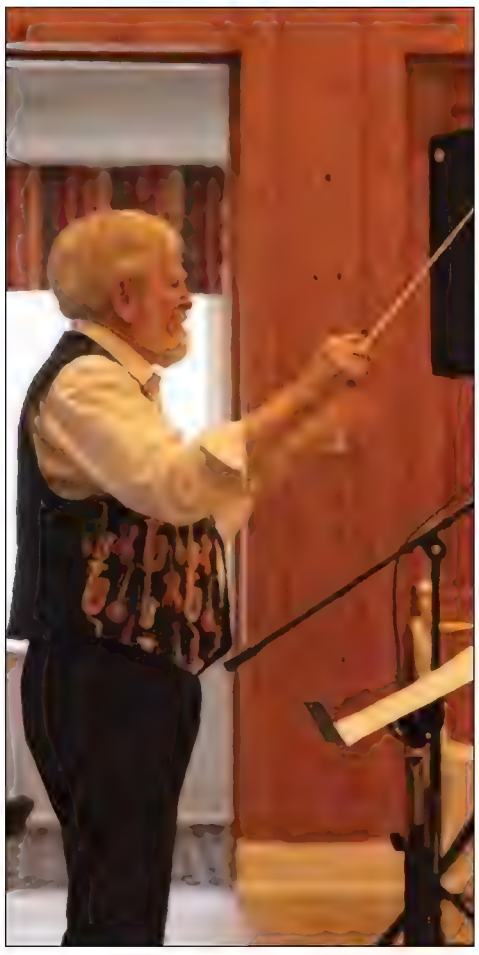
Individuals with experience in property management, finance, maintenance, community service, or governance are encouraged to apply, but all interested community members are welcome.

If interested, please submit a Letter of Interest on or before **December 26, 2025** to:
Paula Ingram, Property Manager

manager@staanworth.ca
Staanworth Non-Profit Housing Corporation

Staanworth Non-Profit Housing Corporation **705-286-3444**
44 Parkside St, Minden, ON, K0M 2K0 **manager@staanworth.ca**

Highlander arts



Bells (and brass) are ringing

The Haliburton Highlands Wind Symphony put on a spectacle for those who braved inclement weather to attend its 2025 holiday concert at Pinestone Resort Nov. 30. The show featured performances from the wind symphony, the Highlands Swing Band and vocalist Jerelyn Craden. *(Mike Baker)*

Left: The versatile Glen Carter conducts the symphony. Top right: The full wind symphony in action. Bottom right: From right, Jane Symons, Kelly Moore, Midori Nagai and Jim Miners hold a tune. *Photos by Michah Wilson.*

COME ROCK WITH US!

LEARN TO CURL WITH THE WILBERFORCE CURLING CLUB!

Ready to try one of Canada's most beloved winter sports? Grab your friends and join us on the ice at no cost!

Whether you're a complete beginner or just want a refresher, this is the perfect chance to learn the basics in a fun and welcoming environment.

Love curling but hate the strain of the traditional hack delivery? You can come out and try stick curling too! This adapted version uses a delivery stick, making the sport accessible and enjoyable for everyone, especially those with mobility issues or injuries. Perfect for curlers with knee, hip, back, or shoulder problems.

Here are the details of our Learn to Curl sessions:

Where: **Wilberforce Curling Club, 2249 Loop Road, Wilberforce. K0L3C0**
Session 1: **Sunday, December 7th from 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM**
Session 2: **Thursday, December 11th from 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM (Registration Day)**
What to Bring: **Clean shoes-essential for the ice!**
Dress Code: **Wear comfortable layers-you'll warm up quickly!**

Equipment: All other necessary curling equipment is provided including brooms and sticks for those who would like to try stick curling.

As a bonus, **we're giving away a FREE half season membership (value $125)** to one lucky new curler who attends our Learn to Curl sessions on December 7th or December 11th, 2025! It's the perfect way to get into the sport–learn the basics, meet great people, and potentially curl for the rest of the season on us!

Got questions? Email wilberforcecurling@gmail.com or for more information, visit: www.wilberforcecurling.com

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The **Supply Ontario** seeks proposals from highly qualified, experienced vendors to provide indigenous multicultural communication and marketing services to Ontario government ministries and agencies. Only Preferred Vendors will be invited to compete for projects as they become available.

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Tender# 21224 for Indigenous and Multicultural Communication Services (projects $30,300 or more)

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Highlander community

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Highlands East	705-243-2419	Serving clients in Harcourt, Highlands East & Paudash
Haliburton	705-457-3010	Registration Starts Nov. 24 Call between 11 AM - 1 PM

Crafty Christmas

The Lloyd Watson Centre was a sight to behold Nov. 29 as the Wilberforce Heritage Guild welcomed folks for its annual holiday craft sale. Running from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., the event attracted more than a dozen local vendors, who sold homemade baked goods and hand-crafted festive items and gifts for the holidays. A lunch was put on by the Wilberforce Legion Ladies Auxiliary. *(Mike Baker)*

Above: Jen Madill shows off her booth stocked with sweet treats.
Photo courtesy of Barb Schofield.

The 12th Annual Highlands Christmas Shindig

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Cheers to our amazing sponsors, volunteers and attendees!

Thanks to you, our Fuel For Warmth fundraiser hit a jaw-dropping: $46,445!

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See You Next Year!

FUEL FOR WARMTH
Serving Haliburton County

Students raise money for teen toy drive

By Mike Baker

A group of Hal High students are once again working hard in the lead up to the holidays to ensure no County-based youth feels forgotten this Christmas season.

The school's Interact Club is bringing its teen toy drive back for another year – launching Dec. 1, the group is raising money and accepting donated items that are handed out to underprivileged kids to enjoy on Christmas.

Demand has spiked in recent years, says Interact members Aurora Wesley and Hazel Jones. In 2023, the club gave away 52 goodie bags to students, while last year they did 70 gift bags. The pair are hoping to at least match that again.

"We see every day just how big the need is," Jones told *The Highlander*. Wesley added, "lots of people in our school are struggling. The past few years, the food banks have taken everything we've gathered, and been so thankful, so that tells us just how important this is. We're trying to do as many as we can."

The packages are made up of toys, games, gift cards, school supplies, hats, mitts, scarves and hygiene products, which are separated into individual packages and donated to the 4Cs Food Bank in Haliburton, Central Food Network in Highlands East and the Minden Community Food Centre.

The school community has been busy this week – there was hot chocolate sold on Monday, a buy-in movie during lunch on Tuesday, and a cookie decorating contest Wednesday. Thursday will see students decorating cardboard boxes - meant to represent life-sized gingerbread houses - with the winner earning a pizza party for their class, with hot apple cider to be sold on Friday. Wesley said the group is hoping to raise at least $2,000.

The high school's Interact Club is taking donations for its teen toy drive until Dec. 10. *File.*

Jones says donations will be accepted until Dec. 10 – while it's being pushed as a school-based effort, she said the group is welcoming contributions from the wider community. Cash or items can be dropped off at the high school office, while cheques are to be made out to 'Interact Club of HHSS'.

"There's always lots going on for younger kids, but we don't see as much for teens over the holidays. The Interact club started doing this to bridge that gap," Wesley said. "Toys might not be the best sort of thing for this age group. We're recommending gift cards… or things like headphones, chargers, cozy socks and hygiene products."

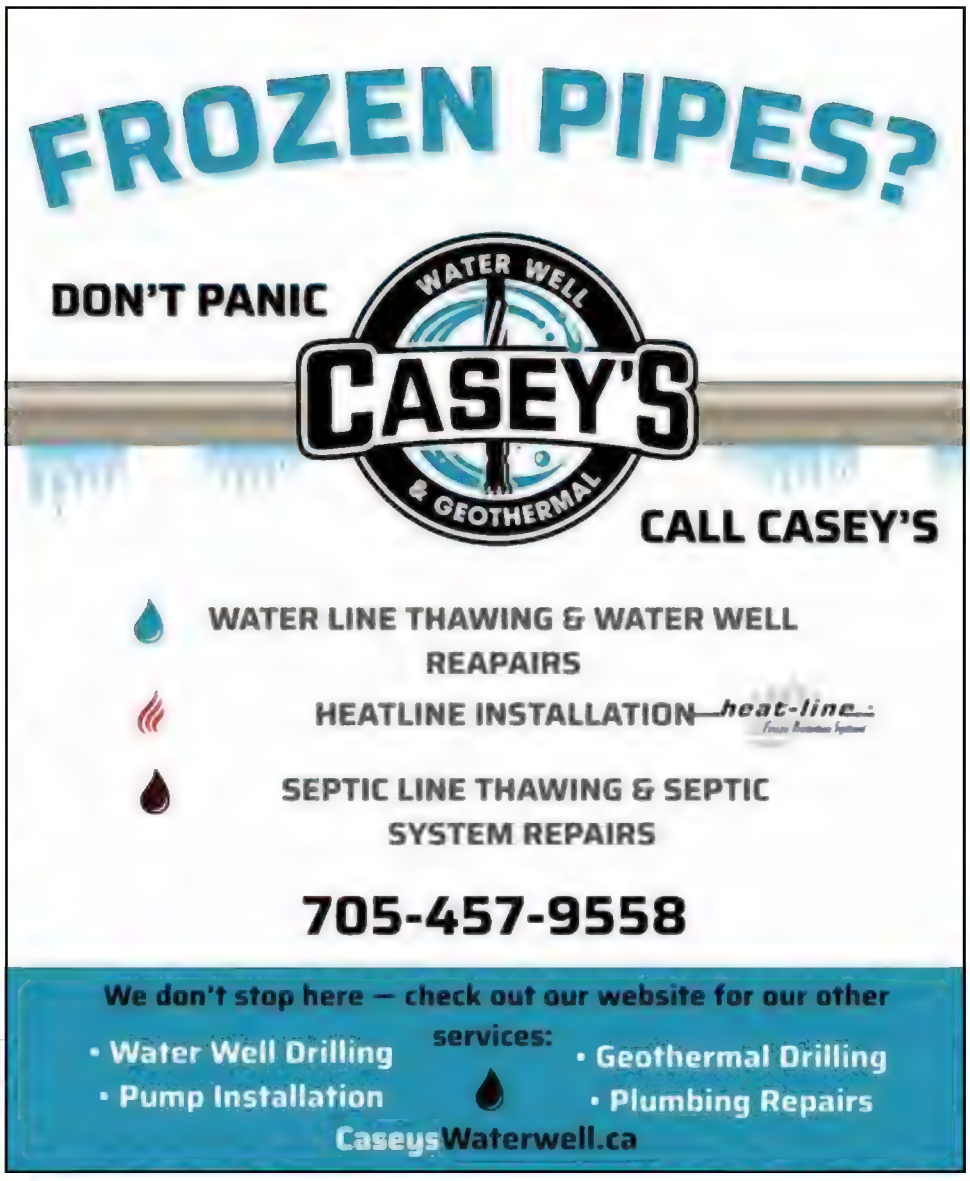
Future plans

The club boasts about 20 members this year. For Jones and Wesley, this is year four, with the pair joining Interact in 2021 as Grade 9 freshmen.

"We're affiliated with Haliburton Rotary, so our motto is 'service above self'. We all love giving back to our community, volunteering, and helping out with important fundraisers and causes every year," Wesley said.

One new initiative the group is hoping to roll out sometime in 2026 is a babysitting night at Hal High – where students offer complimentary services to parents wanting to enjoy an evening alone. Wesley said Interact members want to host something a couple of times a year, welcoming children into the gym for games and reading.

"It'll be something really fun for the kids and also gives parents a break. We know there's a lot of poverty in our area, so it might be unaffordable for some parents to find private childcare for a night," Wesley said. "Parents can use the time to schedule a date night, or just get some extra things done around the house."



Highlander outdoors

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HHOA president Dan Smith hands the junior volunteer of the year award to Ty Neville. *Submitted.*

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HHOA hands out hardware

By Lisa Gervais

The Haliburton Highlands Outdoors Association (HHOA) celebrated its volunteers and supporters at its annual general meeting Nov. 23.

The highest honour, the Jim Cardinell Award, was presented to Roger Prescott. It recognizes outstanding long-term dedication to the HHOA's mission and the advancement of community programs.

Association president Dan Smith said Prescott's leadership, support, and hands-on contributions have had a lasting and positive impact on fisheries enhancement and conservation efforts throughout the region.

Another major highlight was the presentation of the junior volunteer of the year award to Ty Neville, whose enthusiasm, initiative, and dedication at the HHOA Fish Hatchery and community programs reflect the spirit of stewardship the association strives to foster in the next generation, Smith said.

"The HHOA thrives because of volunteers like Roger and Ty," said Smith during the presentations. "Their contributions demonstrate a remarkable commitment to conservation, community, and the continued success of our programs."

HHOA board member Keith Fielding said Prescott has been a member for three years and is very active at the fish hatchery. He recently completed a revamp of the HHOA website. This was Neville's first year, with Fielding describing him as, "a very active outdoorsman… he's full of vim and vigour, the kid is just always there ready to help."

Additional awards recognized individuals and partners whose time, support, and involvement continue to advance the HHOA's goals, including fisheries enhancement, youth education, and habitat stewardship. The AGM also provided members with updates on hatchery output, project development, and ongoing fundraising initiatives.

The HHOA is a non-profit organization committed to enhancing and protecting local fish populations, supporting outdoor recreation, and offering educational programs for youth and the broader community. Through volunteer leadership and community partnerships, the HHOA works to sustain the natural resources that make the Highlands unique.

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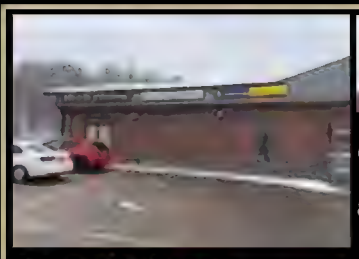
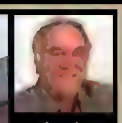

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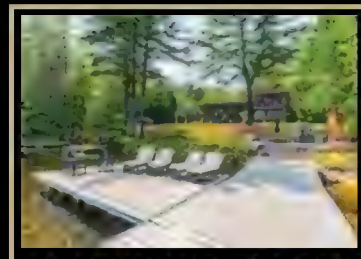
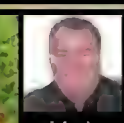

Mark Dennys* (705) 457-0473

SOYERS LAKE - $4,249,900
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- 300ft Sandy Waterfront, 5 Lk Chain
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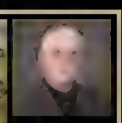

Tom Ecclestone* (705) 754-5101

Clear Lake Rd Home $575,000
- Total privacy with 3 beds & 2 full baths
- 6 acres w/ trails, Several Outbuildings
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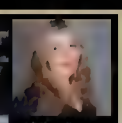

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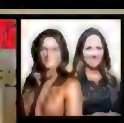
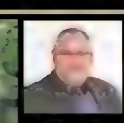


Melanie Maxwell-Hevesi*'** & Andrea Wilson** (705) 854-1000

Haliburton Home $350,000
- 1.15ac lot, 3bed+den, 2bath, 1793sqft
- Spacious kitchen + living spaces
- Barn + seasonal cabin on site



Andrew Hodgson** (705) 854-0130

Haliburton Lake $999,000
- Year-round retreat at water's edge
- 3 beds + bunkie, heated garage & gazebo
- Sandy beach, deep water off the dock

Susanne James* & Andy Mosher** (705) 457-2128 ext. 133

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- Two, 2-Bedroom Artists Homes
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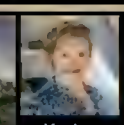

Kathy Martin* (705) 457-7592

Luxury Chalet Living $1,099,000
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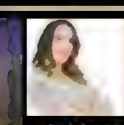
- Spacious Rec Rm, Chef-Inspired Kitchen
- Dtch'd 3-Bay Grg, Radiant Heated Floors



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Grace Lake $1,250,000
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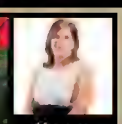

Karen Nimigon** (705) 457-6505

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Minden Home $369,900
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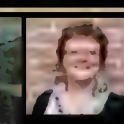
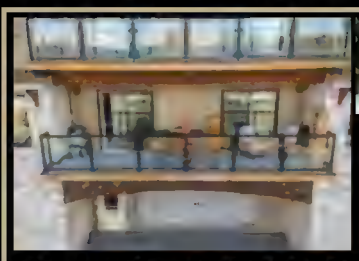
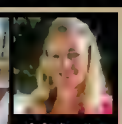


Darlene Reil* (705) 854-2055

Irondale River $324,900
- Well kept 3 bedroom home with garage
- Workshop, "she" shed, walk to amenities
- Storage sheds along the Irondale River

Christine Sharp* (416) 566-1592

Storybook Log Cabin $549,000
- Charming winterized log cabin home
- 8+ acres of private woods, cozy porch
- Close to Tory Hill & trails

Melanie Vigrass* (705) 754-5494

Minden Condo $449,000
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Highlander events

Getting festive

The festive spirit was in the air Nov. 29 at Abbey Gardens as the local community hub transformed into a winter wonderland for its Candy Cane Craze Christmas pop-up event. There was holiday fun for the whole family, with staff on-hand serving holiday drinks and festive treats. People had the chance to tour the twinkle-lit garden path and check out some County-grown Christmas trees. The event will run again Dec. 6. *(Mike Baker)*

Top: Abbey Gardens staff Deanna Kean, Katy Hulme, Jazmin Smith and Angela Kruger were in high spirits. Bottom left: Little Levi, Ivan and Blossom Johnson enjoy a warm pick-me-up with friends Will Querobin and Marla Ponti. Bottom right: Levi has fun with a Christmas craft, assisted by Querobin. *Photos by Michah Wilson.*

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MINDEN HILLS CULTURAL CENTRE

• A selection of artwork from the Agnes Jamieson Gallery's permanent collection, as well as new acquisitions, is now on display. The Gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10 am – 4 pm. All are welcome. Admission is by donation.

• We are hosting a free screening of the documentary Sons (2024) on Thursday, December 4 at 1:00 p.m. Directed by Newfoundland filmmaker Justin Simms, this deeply personal National Film Board documentary follows the first eight years of the life of Simms' son Jude, exploring what it means to raise a boy in today's world. The film is presented in partnership with the Haliburton County Public Library. Admission is free. No pre-registration is required.

For information on all the programs and exhibits offered at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre: culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca or call 705-286-3763.

COUNCIL MEETINGS VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON

Council and Closed Session meetings are currently being conducted in-person (Council Chambers, 7 Milne St., Minden) and with electronic participation. The scheduled upcoming meetings are:

• December 11 – Regular Council Meeting
• December 15 – Special Council Meeting

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by attending in-person or via the live-stream link.

SAFE WINTER DRIVING

When a winter storm is expected, all municipalities have a plan. Drivers need to have their own plan. It is important to delay unnecessary travel during significant storms to give plows time to do their jobs. It's also safer for drivers.

NOTICE OF 2026 BUDGET MEETINGS

Take Notice that there will be a Special meeting of Council and Public Meeting held on December 15, 2025 at 9:00 AM. The purpose of the meetings is to review and discuss the 2026 Mayoral Budget. **Members of the public may access the agenda and Budget materials on December 10, 2025.**

Members of the public are invited to participate in person or electronically and make comment/speak at the Public Meeting relating to the 2026 budget. **Members of the public wishing to participate electronically** must pre-register by emailing admin@mindenhills.ca by Friday, December 12th, before 4:00 pm. Please visit our website for further details.

7 Milne Street, PO Box 359, Minden, ON, K0M 2K0 | Phone: 705-286-1260 · Toll Free 1-844-277-1260 · Fax: 705-286-4917

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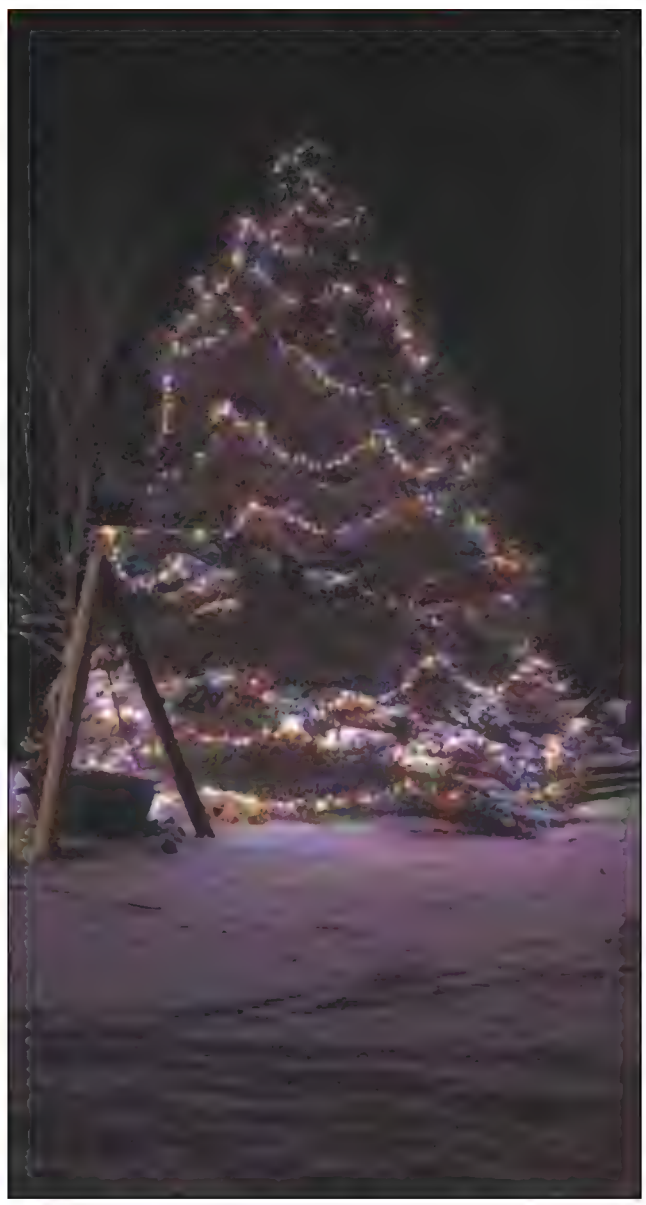
Highlander events



Rocking around the Christmas tree

Algonquin Highlands residents had a jolly good time Nov. 28, with dozens attending a Christmas tree lighting ceremony in Stanhope. Spirits were high as people celebrated the official kick-off of Christmas in the township – there was even an appearance from Santa Claus himself. A tree lighting scheduled Nov. 30 in Dorset was postponed due to bad weather and has been rescheduled for Dec. 12 at 6 p.m. There will also be a ceremony at the Oxtongue Lake Community Centre Dec. 6 at 6 p.m. *(Mike Baker)*

Top left: Brantley Alcock was all wrapped up for Friday's tree lighting ceremony in Stanhope. Top middle: Markie Dick poses in front of the Stanhope Museum. Bottom left: Algonquin Highlands deputy mayor Jennifer Dailloux warms up with a cup of hot chocolate. Bottom middle: Volunteer firefighters Todd Nopper and Robert Sargent enjoyed the show. Right: The Stanhope Christmas tree in all its glory. *Photos by Michah Wilson.*

Haliburton County Council
is seeking members of the public for

Haliburton County Library Board

The County of Haliburton benefits from the involvement of local residents who help County Council make decisions about the Library programs and services provided to our citizens. Applicants for this position must be:

- At least 18 years old
- A Canadian Citizen
- A resident of Haliburton County

As a Board Member you will be an advocate of the library's impact on the community and be prepared to take an active and responsible role in the governance and policymaking of the Board.

You can find the detailed posting along with application instructions on our website at www.haliburtoncounty.ca/careers

If you require assistance with the application process please contact Andrea Brown, Library CEO/Chief Librarian at info@haliburtonlibrary.ca.

The application process will close on December 19, 2025, at noon.

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(FROM STONEY OAKS FARM IN LINDSAY!)

DON'T DELAY, ORDER TODAY

Every name on the pre-ordered turkey list goes into a draw for a $100 Visa gift card, drawn at 12pm on Wednesday Dec. 24.

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GARDENING FOR LIFE

Junior highlanders

MY Haliburton HIGHLANDS
Seniors Active Living Centre

Check out this month's SALC events and activities for residents aged 55+

Dec 2, 10, 17 & 18 - various times
Genealogy for Seniors

December 2 & 16 - 3:30 p.m.
Seniors Cooking Workshop

December 3, 13 - 11 a.m.
Senior Chair Fit Group

December 4, 18 - 10 a.m.
Painting Class

December 4, 5, 10, 19 - various times
Needle Felting

December 8 - 10 a.m.
Historical Holiday Traditions webinar

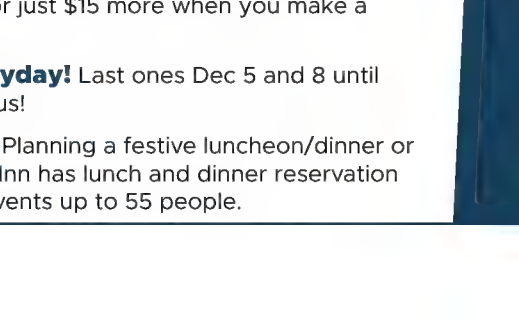
Dec 17 - 1 p.m.
Crafternoon

Fridays - 9 a.m. & 11 a.m.
Seniors Fitness

Drop-in Cards & Board Games
Mondays | 1 pm and Thursdays | 7 pm
Hosted at Minden Legion

Thursdays (7th & 21st) | 1 pm
Hosted at Harcourt Community Centre

Saturdays 2:30 pm
Hosted at Wilberforce Legion



Ontario

Funding for this program has been provided by the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility

For more info, visit www.haliburtoncounty.ca/SALC or pick up a full calendar at a participating SALC location, including a Legion or Library near you!

Wildcats claw red and white in home-opener

The Hal High Red Hawks boys' varsity team dropped their home-opener to I.E. Weldon from Lindsay Nov. 27 by a score of 6-2. The Wildcats opened the scoring in the first to take a 1-0 lead in front of an enthusiastic home crowd. In the second period, I.E. Weldon padded its lead to 2-0 going into intermission. In the third, they dominated the red and white, sniping four goals. The Hawks managed two in the frame: Jace Mills, assisted by Henry Neilson, and Parker Simms, with helpers from Ty and Max Rupnow. The Hawks were back at it Dec. 3, playing LCVI Lindsay. The score was not known as of press time. They host Adam Scott SS at home Dec. 4. Puck drop at A.J. LaRue Arena is slated for 2 p.m. (*Lisa Gervais*)

Top: Goalie Zack Lowe steers the puck into the corner during a Nov. 27 game. Bottom: Luke Gruppe eludes a Wildcat defender and heads up ice. *Photos by Lisa Gervais.*

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DECEMBER EVENTS

LIVE MUSIC ALL MONTH LONG:
Dec 6 - Gord Kidd
Dec 27 - Gord Kidd
Dec 31 (NYE!) - Cam Galloway

NEW Dining Packages - Let us do the cooking this week!
Call for reservations (705) 754 2188

New Year's Eve Celebration on Eagle Lake! Send off 2025 and ring in the New Year with us! We will be offering a delicious 3 course dining menu including prime rib and other options, live music featuring Cam Galloway in Gunner's Pub, fireworks over Eagle Lake and at midnight a Champagne Toast with charcuterie board- all included with dinner or rooms reservations! Join for the music, fireworks and toast after 8pm for only $25 per person.

Dip n Dine Package Sunday through Thursday, add our relaxing WaterSpa experience for two for just $15 more when you make a dinner reservation!

Prime Rib Monday & Fish Fryday! Last ones Dec 5 and 8 until the week of Jan 5th! Come join us!

Holiday Party Time is Here! Planning a festive luncheon/dinner or full evening of celebration? The Inn has lunch and dinner reservation options as well as full evening events up to 55 people.

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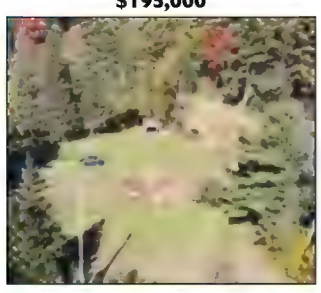

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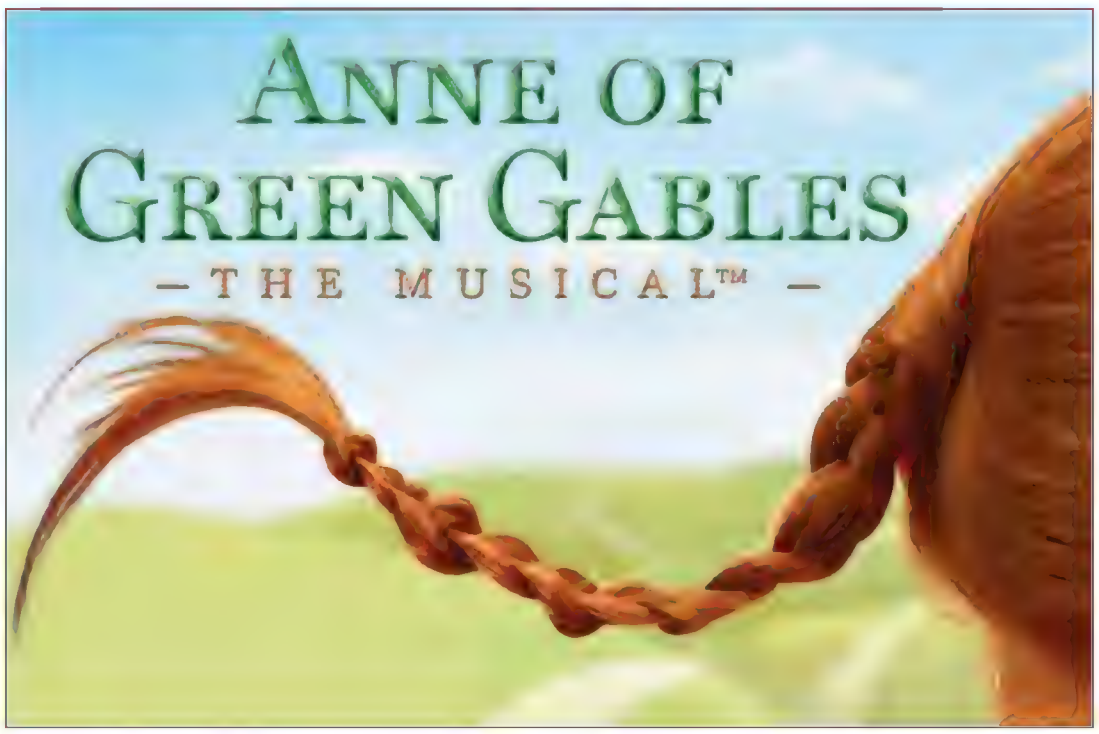
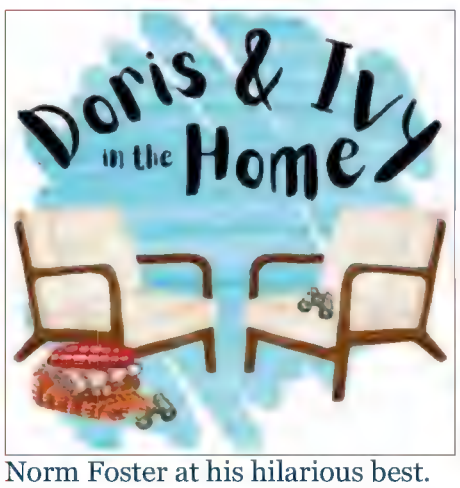


What could be more Canadian than the plucky Anne, winning hearts and taking names. Find out why this glorious adaptation is the longest-running annual musical theatre production.

June 29-July 8, ages 7 and up

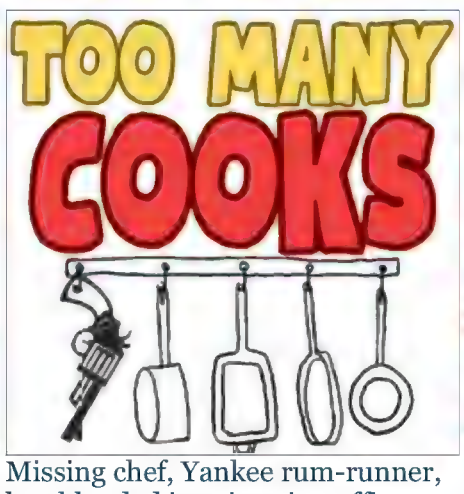


Norm Foster at his hilarious best. Love, gossip, and sex behind the compost heap.

July 13-20, ages 13 and up

Fabián Arciniegas takes you on a journey through the beauty and resilience of the human spirit.

July 21-23, ages 13 and up



Missing chef, Yankee rum-runner, hot-blooded immigration officer and teetotalling Mountie.

July 27-31, ages 13 and up

Back by popular demand! Leisa Way & the Wayward Wind Band celebrate the music of legendary artists.

August 2-6, ages 13 and up

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Huskies Isaac Larmand scored his second hat-trick of the season in a 9-2 win over the Cobourg Cougars Nov. 29. *File.*

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Huskies throttle Cobourg in home ice demolition

By Mike Baker

A remarkable eight-goal third period blitz propelled the Haliburton County Huskies to a 9-2 win over one of its biggest rivals, the Cobourg Cougars, in a pulsating game in Minden Saturday afternoon (Nov. 29).

Alternate captain Isaac Larmand stole the show with a 14-minute hat-trick in the final frame, his second of the season following a three-goal performance against the St. Michael's Buzzers Nov. 15. He's now second for goals on the Huskies, with 11 in 23 games.

Head coach Jordan Bailey credited his team for the strong performance, saying they followed the game plan to a tee.

"We played a very good hockey game. I thought we had tons of chances to score in the first two periods, but the floodgates opened in the third," Bailey said. "We talked during that second intermission about not changing anything, to keep doing what they were doing and the rewards would come.

"You don't think eight goals is going to happen, but I felt we were the better team and that shone through in the third."

The bench boss said the result was even sweeter given the rivalry with the Cougars, who have eliminated the Huskies from two of its four post-season runs since relocating north.

One of the highest volume shooting teams in the OJHL, the Huskies were at it again on Saturday, peppering Timothee Fengos in the Cobourg net with 52 shots. The visitors managed 22 in response.

Liam Oravsky, who joined Haliburton from the Cougars earlier this month, opened the scoring with 14:32 played in the first, tickling the twine on the powerplay for his 14th goal of the season (seven in Haliburton). He was assisted by Kieran Raynor and Chase Del Colombo.

Fengos made 20 saves in the middle frame to keep the Huskies at bay, but he was powerless during the third. Larmand got things going 2:09 into the period, scoring from Julius Da Silva and Christopher Brydges.

The home side then scored four times in as many minutes – Da Silva notching at 5:54 from Larmand and Ryan Gosse, Mike Mardula scoring at 6:33 from Lewis Hergaarden and Brydges, Raynor helped himself to his ninth of the year at 7:35 from Oravsky and Carson Durnin, and Josh Denes got the sixth at nine minutes, scoring on the powerplay from Brydges and Durnin.

Larmand completed his hat-trick with tallies either side of a Cobourg shorthanded goal, notching at 11:47 and 16:06, with Denes wrapping the scoring at 16:38, assisted by Mardula and Kaiden Thatcher.

The match saw two players making their Huskies debut – power forward Brody Coe had two shots and an interference minor during the game, with centreman Nate Taylor also chipping in with a couple of shots.

"They should see themselves near the top of the lineup – Brody gives us some more size, while Nate thinks the game very well and has good skills and a strong motor. I'm excited for both to join the team," Bailey said.

After winning six of 10 games in November, and securing points in two more, Bailey said the team is buying into his methods, which he hopes will result in a lengthy playoff push come spring. He feels the Huskies have strong depth through its lineup.

"We're very much trying to be a four-line team this year, let everyone get into the game. Our bottom six has been playing very well – Denes had two goals and an assist against Cobourg, Mardula also added a goal, so we're still getting that secondary scoring, which is always huge," Bailey said.

It was a one-game weekend for the Huskies, with Sunday's tilt against the Newmarket Hurricanes cancelled due to inclement weather. Bailey said it will likely be rescheduled for 2026.

There's an opportunity for the team to climb even higher in the standings this week – the Huskies visit the Wellington Dukes Dec. 5 and host the North York Rangers Dec. 6 (4 p.m. puck drop), with both teams below the hometown team in the league's East Conference.

"We've got to bring our A-game – whenever you play Wellington, you know it's going to be a tough task, especially in their barn, and North York has been playing much better lately. It'll be two good games," Bailey said.

Home of the Highland Storm

A well-earned victory

A convincing 3–0 win is always memorable, but the Nov. 30 game against Lindsay felt special from the opening puck drop to the final horn.

From the outset, the U18 A&W Haliburton team played with purpose, discipline, and a collective determination that elevated every shift. What unfolded over three periods was not just a shutout victory, but a showcase of resilience, teamwork, and smart hockey.

The tone was set early by goaltender Neil Mihlik, who delivered a composed and confident performance between the pipes. Every save he made, whether a routine blocker stop or a point-blank pad stack, seemed to energize the bench. Mihlik's shutout wasn't just the product of individual skill; his poised presence allowed the defence to play aggressively yet responsibly, knowing they had a steady last line of protection.

On the offensive side, Eric Mueller drove the team forward with relentless pressure. His determination was evident each time he touched the puck. Mueller's forechecking forced turnovers, opened passing lanes, and kept the opposing defence scrambling. Eric's drive dictated the pace of play and created opportunities that ultimately led to the team's three-goal outburst.

Meanwhile, Austin Latanville delivered the kind of two-way performance that coaches push for at every practice. Equally committed on offence and defence, Latanville played a critical role in maintaining the team's structure. Whether he was cycling the puck in the offensive zone or hustling back to disrupt a rush, his consistency provided the glue that held the team together.

Perhaps the most impressive aspect of the night came in that third period. With a lead to protect, the team made a collective choice: no reactive penalties. They refused to get pulled into unnecessary scrums or retaliatory plays. Instead, they focused on clean, disciplined hockey, controlling possession and forcing the opposition to earn every inch of ice. That maturity sealed the game as much as any goal.

By the end, the 3–0 scoreline wasn't just a win. It was the result of a team that trusted each other, stayed composed, and executed with purpose—a well-earned victory from start to finish. Go U18 Storm. (*Submitted*)

Goaltender Neil Mihlik. *Photo by Michah Wilson.*

STARS of the WEEK

NEIL MIHLIK

By the time the final buzzer sounded, his clean sheet had become the emotional centerpiece of the night.

ERIC MUELLER

He refused to let the opposition breathe, and that intensity rippled through the entire offensive unit.

AUSTIN LATANVILLE

In key moments, especially as the third period began, his calm decision-making helped the team stick to their plan.

Photos by Tim Tofflemire

SCORE BOARD

Nov. 25 U9MD Haliburton Hockey Haven vs Newcastle 5-2 W
U11 Carquest Minden vs Sturgeon 2-1 L

Nov. 26 U11 Car Quest Minden vs Kawartha 8-0 W

Nov. 29 U12 Carquest Minden vs Brock 7-2 W
U9 MD Haliburton Hockey Haven vs Douro 17-4 L
U13 Casey's Water Well & Geothermal vs Sturgeon 3-2 W
U15 Minden Pharmasave vs Mariposa 4-0 W
U15 REP Cheryl Smith RE/MAX vs Ennismore 1-1 T
U18 A&W Haliburton vs Lindsay 3-0 W

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What's on

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION EVENTS

Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 129 Haliburton

Mondays: Office open 9 a.m. to noon, clubroom closed. Bridge at 1 p.m.
Tuesdays: Games and cards night starting at 6:30 p.m. All are welcome. Fun darts at 7 p.m.
Wednesdays: Bid euchre 1 p.m. start, Remembrance Hall. Bingo, doors open at 5 p.m. with a 7 p.m. start time, Remembrance Hall. Snack bar available from 5:30 p.m. – French fries and hot dogs available while supplies last.
Thursdays: General meeting third Thursday of the month, ladies auxiliary meeting last Thursday of the month.
Fridays: Meat draw, five draws, five prizes each draw, first draw at 4:30 p.m., last draw at 6:30 p.m., tickets $2 per draw. Paul Sisson, MC. Friday fun darts 4:30 p.m. onwards. 50/50 draw at 5 p.m., tickets are $1 and available in the clubroom. Beginning July 4, board games for seniors from 10 a.m. to noon.
Saturdays: Open only for special events Clubroom hours: Monday 3-9 p.m., Tues 5-9 p.m., Wed/Thurs 3-6 p.m., Fri 3-7 p.m., Saturday and Sunday closed.
Upcoming events: Drum circle Dec. 7, Jan. 4, with a 1 p.m. start time.

Royal Canadian Legion - Mabel D. Brannigan Branch 636 Minden

Lunch 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. **Monday to Thursday** with regular menu and daily special including Liver Lovers' Tuesday.
Friday Fish & Chips & Wings. Lunch 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and dinner 4-7 p.m.
Saturday all day breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with meat draws at 11 a.m.
Call ahead any day for take-out: 705-286-4541
Weekly activities:
Karaoke: call for dates
Monday: Rug Hookers every second week.
Monday: Euchre 1-3 p.m.
Thursday: Cribbage 1-3 p.m., Darts 7-9 p.m. and euchre 7-9 p.m.

Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 624 Wilberforce

Monday: open 7 to 10 p.m. There's darts Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29 at 7 p.m. Cost is $5 per player.
Tuesday: closed, special events only
Wednesday: open 2 to 10 p.m. Dec. 3, 10 and 17 is darts at 2 p.m. $5/player. There's also quick supper from 5 to 6:30 p.m., with the menu changing weekly. Cost is $10 per person. And Cribbage League starts at 6:30 p.m., no need to pre-register.
Thursday: open 2 to 10 p.m. HHHS social rec Dec. 11 at 10 a.m.
Friday: open 2 to 11 p.m.
Dec. 5 and 19 is wings and jam session from 5 to 8 p.m. Cost is $15 per pound. Dec. 12 is Community Care 55+ Lunch $17, at noon, featuring Fish and chips, one piece $15, two piece $20 .
Saturday: open 2 to 9 p.m. Meat draw Dec. 6, 13 and 20 at 3 p.m. Dec. 20 is trivia night at 7 p.m. $5/player.
Sunday: closed, special events only. Dec. 14, LA Breakfast from 9-11 a.m. Cost is $10 per person.

EVENTS

The Haliburton Highlands Land Trust (HHLT) is hosting its online holiday auction until Dec. 10. There are over 100 items to bid on, from vacation stays, guided hikes and more. This year's theme is 'taking care of what takes care of us', reflecting HHLT's mission to protect nature in Haliburton. To support, visit galabid.com.haliburton-highlands.

Dec. 4, 1 p.m. The Minden Hills library is hosting a screening of Sons. The movie follows a new father from Newfoundland who wonders how to raise his son at a time when the concept of masculinity is being called into question. No registration required.

Dec. 4, 5 to 8 p.m. Ladies Shopping Night at Haliburton village. Get your Christmas shopping done early by checking out what Haliburton vendors are carrying for the holiday season.

Dec. 5-7, the sixth-annual Haliburton Winter Fair at Castle Antiques and Café. Featuring more than 40 vendors. Friday runs from 5-8 p.m. and features 'Tacos and Tunes'; Saturday is from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and includes free kids' activities and photos with Santa (11 a.m. to 1 p.m.); Sunday is 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Dec. 5, 11:30 a.m. 'Merry and Bright' Christmas luncheon at Minden Bible Church, located at 177 Bobcaygeon Rd. Featuring soup and sandwich, available by donation. All are welcome.

Dec. 6, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Haliburton Highlands OPP is hosting its Fill-a-Cruiser event, accepting non-perishable food donations at locations across the County. Local OPP auxiliary members will be at Easton's Valu-Mart from 10 a.m to noon and Dollo's Foodland in Minden from 1 to 3 p.m.; Haliburton Foodland from 10 a.m. to noon and Todd's Independent from 1 to 3 p.m. Members will also be at the Wilberforce Foodland Dec. 13 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Dec. 6, 2 p.m. Heritage Ballet presents The Nutcracker at the Northern Lights Performing Arts Pavilion, with support from Skyline Dance Studio. Tickets are $28 in advance or $30 at the door. There are further shows Dec. 6 at 7 p.m. and Dec. 7 at 2 p.m.

Dec. 6, 6 p.m. The last of Algonquin Highlands' three tree-lighting ceremonies takes place at the Oxtongue Lake Community Centre, located at 3971 Hwy. 60. Come out and partake in some festive cheer.

Dec. 6, 7 to 9 p.m. Christmas Open House at the Wilberforce Red Cross Outpost Historic House. Come and join for good cheer, seasonal goodies and hot apple cider. For more information, contact Barb Schofield at 705-448-2598. There will be caroling around the tree in the Agnew's Store parking lot before, at 6:30 p.m.

Dec. 7, 3 to 5 p.m. Highlands Festival Singers presents selections from Handel's Messiah for its holiday concert at Haliburton United Church. Tickets are $25 each. Get them by emailing highlandsfestivalsingers@gmail.com.

Dec. 9, 5:30 p.m. Yoga for the Food Bank event at Highland Hills United Church in Minden. Donation-only yoga class. Calling all guys and girls to help – all are welcome. For more information, visit holnessyoga.ca.

Have a non-profit event you want advertised? email mike@thehighlander.ca.

A scene from a past *The Nutcracker. File.*

Two decades of enchanting families

By Lisa Gervais

Nothing says 'holiday season' in Haliburton County quite like Heritage Ballet's *The Nutcracker.*

Again, working with Skyline Dance Studio, creator Julie Barban said she has some changes in store for the show that has enchanted local families for two decades.

"I've changed up Waltz of the Snowflakes a little bit, so somebody who has come on a fairly regular basis, they are certainly going to notice that," she said.

Barban added, "I kind of changed Waltz of the Flowers last year, so this year it's a snowflake theme. The party scene is a little bit different, too. I don't have any little girls in it. I went with all a little bit older."

In fact, she said she is featuring the senior students more in this year's ballet.

Her colleague, Wilson Klodt Wong, has choreographed the Arabic dance, again, and is dancing with Chloe Morissette this year.

The lead dancer is Maddy Walker. "This is her fourth production, just since I've been at Skyline," Barban said. "Chloe has been in it since she was two, so Chloe's 14th year."

She added they have a few upgrades and additions in costumes thanks to sewer Dani Smolen, who "does her magic."

Barban and her team started working with their young dancers the second week of September, devoting Saturdays and Sundays.

The 20-year milestone is not lost on the woman who oversees the classic tale of the story loosely based on the E.T.A. Hoffmann fantasy story *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*, about a girl who befriends a nutcracker that comes to life on Christmas Eve and wages a battle against the evil Mouse King.

She said she loves the story, the music and the dancing and "bringing it to the community. It's been pretty awesome." She admits she is proud of the work over the years, and what it means to the Highlands.

After two decades, Barban said she has her role down to a science but it really came together in 2025 "It's taken a long time, but it feels like 'wow, this really came together. It only took me 20 years," she said with a chuckle.

However, the end is in sight, with Barban saying she might do a few more Nutcrackers before hanging the ballet up and freeing up more of her time.

As for this weekend, she said, "I don't know that I get excited, because it's just so ingrained now. But I just love it."

There are three performances this weekend: Dec. 6 at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. and Dec. at 2 p.m.

For tickets, go to onstagedirect.com

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Municipality of Dysart et al

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Upon final selection, the applicant will be required to provide, at their own expense, a Criminal Record and Judicial Matters check from the Ontario Provincial Police or appropriate police force. The detailed job description is available on our website www.dysartetal.ca/careers

Interested individuals are invited to email a detailed resume and cover letter to: Sonja Marx, HR Manager - hr@dysartetal.ca

No Later Than 4:00 pm Friday December 12th, 2025.

*** We thank all who apply; however only those selected for an interview will be contacted. Accommodations for applicants with disabilities will be provided upon request. The Municipality of Dysart et al is an equal opportunity employer. Personal information is collected in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and will be used only for employment purposes. ***

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The ideal candidate will have 1-3 years' experience working in a mental health setting or 1-3 years' experience working in an administrative role in mental health or medical setting. They should have experience working with an electronic medical records system and have exceptional confidentiality awareness skills and understanding of PHIPA.

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Visit www.pointintime.ca for a detailed job description.

HOURS PER WEEK: 21 hours/week
RATE OF PAY: $29.00/hour

Please send cover letter and resume to HR@pointintime.ca or fax 705-457-3492 by December 12, 2025.

HELP WANTED

Township of Algonquin Highlands

Township of Algonquin Highlands

The Township of Algonquin Highlands is seeking applications from qualified individuals for the following position.

Public Works Supervisor

Visit our website at: www.algonquinhighlands.ca for the complete job description.

Qualified candidates are invited to submit a cover letter and resume by **3:00 pm on December 12, 2025** to:

Dawn Mugford-Guay
Human Resources Coordinator
Township of Algonquin Highlands
1123 North Shore Road
Algonquin Highlands, ON K0M 1S0
Email: dmugfordguay@algonquinhighlands.ca

OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory of

Heather Sleightholm
(nee Switzer)

(Resident of Elliot Lake)

Heather Loreen Sleightholm (nee Switzer) passed away peacefully, surrounded by family, on Sunday, November 30th, at the age of 77.

Born on May 21, 1948, in Gooderham, she was the youngest daughter of Wilbert and Alberta Switzer. Heather attended Haliburton High School before moving to Toronto. She lived a life rooted in faith, expressing her beliefs daily through her integrity.

Heather was the beloved wife and best friend of Brent Sleightholm. She was a loving mother to twin daughters Kelly Hines and Stacey Hines, and son Christoper (Chris) Hines (Jaime). She also leaves behind her cherished fur babies, Bella (dog) and Angel (cat).

She will be remembered for her love of engaging political discussions (especially while watching Fox News), navigating her favorite social media apps like TikTok, and creating content for her local Elliot Lake community Facebook page.

Heather was the loving sister of Effie McPherson, Ruby Billings, and the late Hazel Maxwell, and a beloved aunt to many nieces and nephews.

Visitation & Funeral Service

Friends and family are invited to call at the **HALIBURTON COMMUNITY FUNERAL HOME**, 13523 Hwy. #118, Haliburton, ON K0M 1S0 (705) 457-9209, on Monday, December 8, 2025, at 12:00 (Noon) for a service in the Chapel (Visitation 2 hours prior). As an expression of your sympathy, flowers are more than encouraged.

Al Sletcher Community Funeral Home

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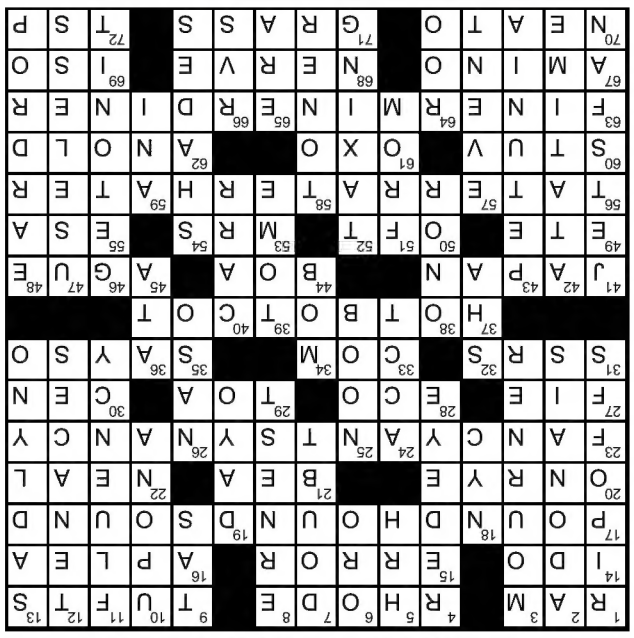

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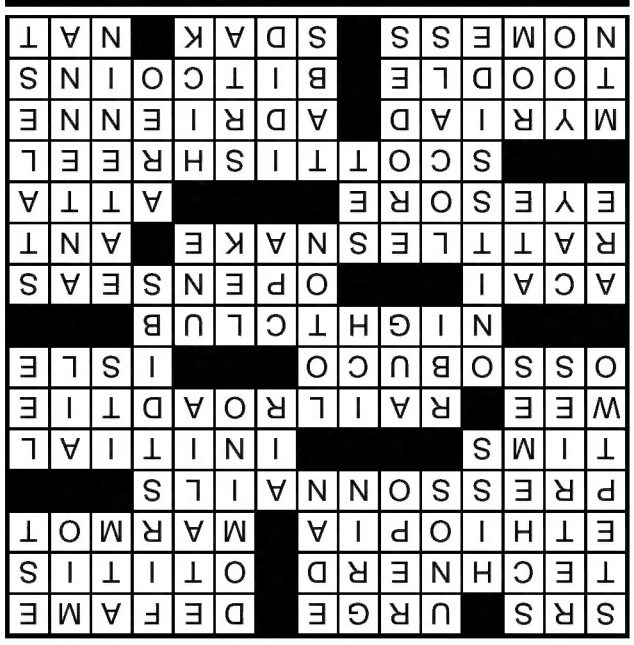

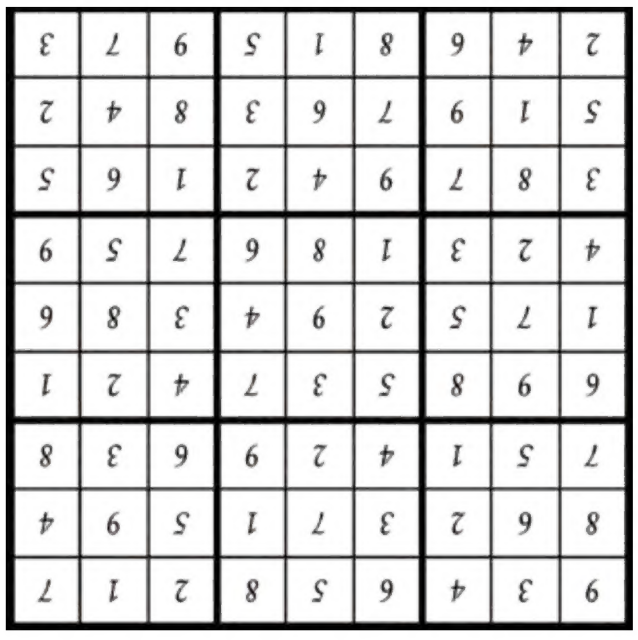

OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory of

Shirley Spanger
(nee MacDuff)

(Resident of Gooderham)

Peacefully in her sleep at her residence on Wednesday evening, November 19, 2025 in her 82nd year. Beloved wife and best friend of Leslie Spanger. Loving mother of Shannon, Brandon and Micheal (predeceased). Adoring grandmother to Megan, Trislyn. Cole, Jena and Evan. Remembered by her great-grandchildren Ivan & Henry. Dear sister of Dawson (Margaret - predeceased). Predeceased by her sister Mary, her brothers Ross, Glen and Blakey. Also remembered by her nieces and nephews. Shirley will be missed by her large extended family and many friends. Shirley worked at the Chrysler Trim Plant in Ajax for over 35 years. She loved creating ceramic dolls and their clothes and later worked with silicone dolls. She had an interest in Egyptian embroidery and crocheting. She is greatly loved and will be missed by all who knew her.

Celebration of Life

Family and Friends are invited to attend the **ROBERT McCAUSLAND MEMORIAL COMMUNITY CENTRE** for a Celebration of Shirley's Life on Saturday, December 13, 2025, from 1-4 p.m. As an expression of sympathy, donations to the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation would be appreciated by the family. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the **HALIBURTON COMMUNITY FUNERAL HOME,** 13523 Hwy. #118, Haliburton, Ontario (705) 457-9209.

In Loving Memory of

Gary White

Resident of Highland Grove

At his residence on Tuesday morning, November 25, 2025 in his 82nd year. Beloved husband of Linda White (nee Knight). Dear brother of Joan Pocklington (Terry - predeceased), Ron (Carol). Predeceased by his parents Charles and Ethel White and his brother Charlie. Also lovingly remembered by his many nieces and nephews. Gary enjoyed old cars and his yearly fishing trip.

Private Celebration Of Life

Family and Friends are invited to attend the **ROBERT McCAUSLAND MEMORIAL COMMUNITY CENTRE**, 1043 Community Center Rd, Gooderham, ON K0M 1R0, for a Celebration of Shirley's Life on Saturday, December 13, 2025, from 1-4 p.m. As an expression of sympathy, donations to the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation would be appreciated by the family. Funeral arrangements have been entrusted to the HALIBURTON COMMUNITY FUNERAL HOME, 13523 Hwy. #118, Haliburton, Ontario (705) 457-9209.

In Loving Memory of

Joyce Marguerite Sisson
(nee Clarke)

Passed away peacefully at the age of 100 at the Kingsway Place retirement home in Aurora, Ontario on November 26, 2025.

Joyce, who lived a full and active life, was the loving daughter of Norman and Evelyn Clarke, nee Hickton, of Toronto, sister of Noreen Hunwicks, nee Clarke, deceased, wife of Bernard (Bern) Sisson of West Guildford, Ontario, who predeceased her in 2006, beloved mother of only son Craig, grandmother to Craig's spouse Lynn and Craig's children, Carleigh and Reid of Toronto, great-grandmother to Carleigh's children, Weston and Audrey, and aunt to her nieces, Audra Hunwicks of Montreal and Donna Hunwicks-Hopper of Dieppe, New Brunswick. She was also aunt to many nieces and nephews of Bern's extended Sisson family in West Guilford, Ontario.

Joyce was born on July 25, 1925, in the Toronto neighbourhood of Humber Bay and grew up on Guthrie Ave. She did her Senior Matriculation at Mimico High School and worked for years as a secretary and executive assistant at the head office of the Robert Simpson Company department store in Toronto. She was an avid and talented singer who sang with big bands at many venues including the Palais Royale on Lakeshore Blvd. and the Royal York Hotel in Toronto. During World War II she worked as an aircraft spotter in the Canadian Women's Auxiliary Air Force where she attained the rank of Corporal.

Joyce met her future husband Bernard in Haliburton, Ontario where her parents had a vacation home. They were married in Toronto in June of 1952 and Craig was born in April of 1954 in Kingston, Ontario. Bern worked for General Motors Acceptance Corporation and was posted to several cities in Ontario over the ensuing years. The family moved from Kingston to Smith Falls, Pembroke, Ottawa, North Bay, Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, Peterborough and finally settling back in Toronto in 1978. Joyce sang in many church and community choirs, most notable being the Choralaires group in Sudbury where she particularly loved soloing in the group's annual performance of Handel's Messiah. She also sang and soloed for many years in various choirs in Toronto.

Joyce loved to travel and was most happy on a trip with Bern. Over the years they travelled to Australia, Hawaii, Japan, Hong Kong, much of Europe, North Africa and the British Isles. They regularly attended Bern's annual RAF 100 Bomber Squadron reunions in England. Joyce continued to attend the reunions solo after Bern's death in 2006. Joyce continued to travel on her own making regular trips to Florida, Arizona and England.

Joyce and Bern cherished their Haliburton roots and had special times at their cottage on Paradise Lake, visiting their son's cottage on Kennisis Lake and of course having many joyous times over the years with Bern's extended family in West Guilford.

It was a special moment on her 100th birthday to receive congratulations from King Charles and Queen Camilla, Governor General of Canada, Prime Minister of Canada, Premier of Ontario, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario and a presentation by the Mayor of Aurora, Tom Mracic.

Joyce will be greatly missed by her grandchildren Carleigh and Reid, in particular Grandma's annual Christmas shopping sprees at the Eaton Centre in Toronto followed by a steak dinner at the Keg Mansion.

Joyce's life will be celebrated at a service at St. Georges Anglican Church in Haliburton, Ontario on a date to be determined in the spring of 2026.

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AL ANON- WE CARE, are you troubled by someone's drinking? Meetings: Thursdays 7 p.m., St. Anthony's 27 Victoria Street, Haliburton, and Mondays 7 p.m. at Highland Hills United Church, 21 Newcastle, Rear Entrance, Minden. 1-888-4AL-ANON (1-888-425-2666) al-anon.org All are welcome.

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Highlander puzzles

Gifted People

by Barbara Olson
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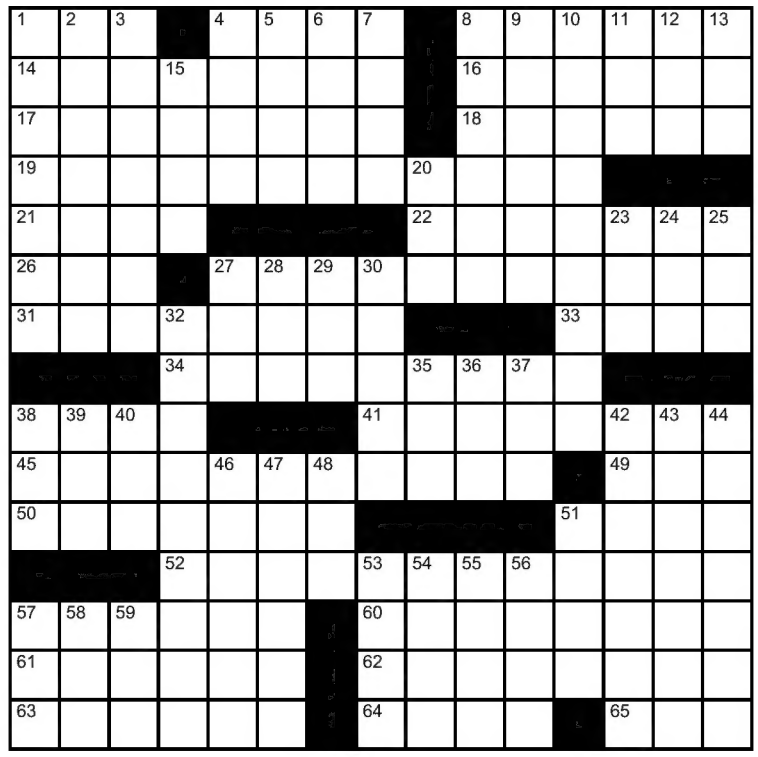

Across

1 Discount recipients, often: Abbr.
4 Habit-quitter's bane
8 Talk smack about
14 Computer whiz, stereotypically
16 Ear inflammation
17 Its capital is Addis Ababa
18 Prairie dog's cousin
19 Gift for a carpenter without a hammer?
21 Place for a double-double, for short
22 Quick sign-off mark, maybe
26 Petite, in Paisley
27 Gift for a well-dressed track worker?
31 Veal dish in Milano
33 Man in the Irish Sea, for one
34 Gift for an after-hours golfer?
38 Superfood smoothie berry
41 Ocean liner's mileu
45 Gift for a baby plumber-to-be?
49 Crumb carrier
50 Junkyard, to neighbours, maybe
51 "___ boy!" ("Well done, son!")
52 Gift for a Glaswegian angler?
57 Whole host (of)
60 "The National" anchor ___ Arsenault
61 "___-oo" (Bath "bye-bye")
62 Money that's mined
63 Easy to clean, in ads
64 Mt. Rushmore's state
65 Jazzy King Cole

Down

1 Second in a how-to guide
2 Gives it another whirl
3 Hatches, as a plan
4 Juan's ones
5 Seized sedan, say
6 Emulate the Cheshire Cat
7 Rapper nicknamed Humble the Magnificent
8 Piece with pips
9 "The list goes on", in Latin
10 Ownership claim before anyone else
11 Place for cheques and balances
12 "O Sole ___" (aria Bryan Adams once sang with Pavarotti)
13 Je suis, tu es, il/elle ___ ...
15 Sound from a ticked-off tom
20 Stuff to be inspired?
23 ___ do or die
24 Need to take a sick day
25 Geddy who wrote "My Effin' Life"
27 Slugger's coup, for short
28 Prov. holiday mo.
29 Germany's first person?
30 Have a ___ one's plate
32 Tipped over
35 One up from a bookkeeper: Abbr.
36 Albanian currency unit
37 Article in "Le Devoir"?
38 Texter's "r"
39 Coral island
40 Fell for, as a lie
42 Like a meal from DoorDash, say
43 TV "rabbit ears"
44 Best for making bread cubes, in a way
46 Whom tourists might ask for directions
47 Deteriorates, as confidence
48 Ready to roll
51 Of Mars: Comb. form.
53 Keep ___ on (monitor)
54 "You couldn't have!" retort
55 Mlle, across the Pyrenees
56 Hayseed
57 Range element?: Abbr.
58 "___-hoo!" (verbal "psst!")
59 Queen's Park gallery in T.O.

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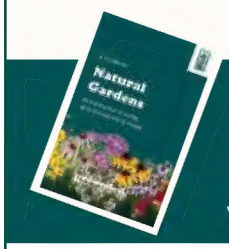

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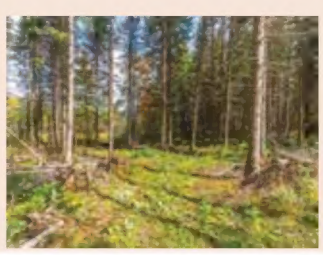

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